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ABSTRACT

This manual is designed to teach young people about planning a conference and to offer advice to the adults working with them on providing support. It is based on a successful sex education conference sponsored by the Youth Action Program (East Harlem, New York), which was planned and conducted by young people with minimal adult leadership. Part 1 of this manual offers guidelines on: (1) clarifying the need, purpose, and goals; (2) charting the planning process and forming a planning group; (3) developing leadership; (4) helping youth to speak out clearly; (5) establishing an effective planning group; (6) running meetings; (7) making decisions; (8) conflict resolution; (9) deciding on content (topics, issues, and questions); and (10) developing a format. In part 2, seven case studies are presented of youth participation in health projects. A brief report is given of each project's objectives, activities, problems, implementation, and outcomes. (JD)

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YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN HEALTH

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A Publication of the National Commission
on Resources for Youth, Inc.
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The National Commission on Resources for Youth

The National Commission on Resources for Youth was founded in 1967 as an independent, non-profit organization to expand opportunities for young people to assume active, responsible roles in their communities--what NCRY calls Youth Participation. In programs of Youth Participation, young people gain direct experience in making decisions, working in partnership with their peers and with adults, and meeting genuine community needs. A comprehensive Youth Participation program also provides for youth to reflect critically on their experience, and to study related subject matter. NCRY seeks out, promotes and assists Youth Participation programs that recognize the capabilities and developmental needs of young people.

In 1982, NCRY joined forces with the Institute for Responsive Education. IRE works with parent and citizen organizations to bring about improvements in public schools. It conducts research and does advocacy relating to citizen involvement in education.

Executive Director of NCRY: Peter Kleinbard

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The manuscript was typed by Dana Rudolph and production was supervised by Owen Heleen.

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INTRODUCTION: YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN HEALTH

Health problems among adolescents exact a severe social and economic cost. Fifteen to 24-year olds are the only group in the United States for which the mortality rate is increasing (by 7.5% since 1960). Sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancies, poor diet that diminishes academic performance are common among 10 to 18-year olds and especially harmful among the poor who have the fewest resources to overcome them. Often, the worst consequences become evident only in adulthood, when patterns of destructive behavior can lead to chronic disease. Loss of educational and employment opportunities due to substance abuse or early pregnancy limit the ability to contribute as family members and workers. The economic consequences to individuals, states and the Federal government are growing more severe because of inflating health and welfare costs.

Most adolescent health problems are due to behavior rather than to physical illness. Such behavior often stems from "immature judgements combined with uncertain self-esteem and strong peer pressure."* Consequently, those seeking preventative measures have shown increasing interest in approaches that strengthen self-esteem and turn peer pressure into a positive rather than negative force. Youth Participation is such an approach. In these programs, adolescents provide health-related information, counsel peers, or teach others about health.

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* *Better Health for Our Children: A National Strategy*. The Report of the Select Committee for the Promotion of Child Health, Vol. 1. The U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C. 1981, p.117.

Young people are engaged as partners of adults in helping their peers and others. Most readers will be familiar with this concept from Youth Tutoring Youth in which young people help younger children in reading and math. Tutoring programs have brought impressive improvements in academic skills to both tutor and tutee. Youth Participation programs have the same potential in the health area. When young people offer health service or information, they are motivated to understand and to practice what they advocate for others.

Research on youth involvement in health is limited. Unlike tutoring, where there is a great deal of knowledge, so far we have evidence from evaluations of only a few programs to indicate the benefits and problems. Given the large number of casualties among teens and the increasing costs of health care, it would seem important that a great deal more work be done.

The reader will be aware early that the concept of "helping" incorporated in the projects reported here is different from the conventional one. These projects operate on the assumption that those giving help benefit nearly as much or more than those receiving it. Thus, in a peer counseling project, the counselor will probably gain as much as those s/he is advising. The projects are less hierarchical than most health agencies. Both the helper and the client are viewed as potential resources. The projects stress experience and reflection as a way to learn how to help clients. The helpers are encouraged to utilize their training early, to counsel or teach, and then to reflect on their efforts under adult guidance with the aim of deepening their knowledge and improving their capacity to help.

This booklet was prepared to assist practioners by describing practices that successful programs have tried and found to be effective. The first section details the extraordinary effort by young people of the Youth Action Program in East Harlem, New York to plan and put on a community-wide sex education conference. The second section has descriptions of seven youth health projects.

We hope that these will help readers to develop their own programs and we look forward to learning about their efforts.

PART ONE

CONFERENCE ON SEX, PREGNANCY AND RELATIONSHIPS

PREFACE TO PART ONE

On August 9, 1982, 250 young people and adults from New York City attended the Conference on Sex, Pregnancy and Relationships of the Youth Action Program (YAP). The day-long event was the culmination of nearly six months of planning and hard work by young people. The Conference addressed a serious community problem: young people's lack of knowledge about sexuality and human relationships. Planned and run by members of East Harlem's Youth Action Program, the conference demonstrated that young people, many of them not successful in schools and other conventional institutions, could assume leadership roles in improving their communities. It was carefully planned, well executed, thoroughly evaluated and is being followed up.

YAP is a community organization established by Dorothy Stoneman in order to further the efforts of young people in East Harlem to develop leadership and improve the community. Program activities include discussion groups, social service and political work.* Planning for the Conference on Sex, Pregnancy and Relationships was one of about eight activities going on concurrently at YAP when NCRY became involved in the late Winter of 1982. NCRY joined the planning committee in order to learn more about how YAP develops youth leadership. Soon, NCRY became an active participant. The six month planning process exemplified principles that NCRY has found to be essential in strong Youth Participation:

- Challenging and meaningful action
- Close collaboration between youth and adults
- Decisionmaking by youth
- Reflection

---

* Appendix 1 contains a description of YAP.

NCRY's participation offered an opportunity to identify and describe an exceptionally rich Youth Participation effort so that others might draw upon YAP's experience. This manual is the result. Documentation presents temptations for endlessly detailed description. NCRY has tried to select only those activities that might be helpful to other groups seeking to incorporate Youth Participation in the planning of conferences or other community activities. We have stressed processes that groups have found it to be troublesome. Our intention is not to offer a recipe book, but to highlight aspects of YAP's process that may be especially useful to others. Readers may want to seek additional resources that have more extensive information on certain aspects of developing a conference such as publicity or public speaking.

The preparation of this guide would not have been possible without the spirited assistance of the members of Youth Action Program's Follow-Up Committee. The Committee was headed by Richard Malavet during the period of planning for the Conference on Sex, Pregnancy and Relationships. Richard as well as YAP members Dorette Grant and Johnny Rivera helped a great deal in preparing this manual. Dorothy Stoneman, Director of YAP, reviewed the manual. Dorothy's inspired leadership of YAP has helped all of the participants, young people and adults, to realize and develop their potential for collaborative activity to benefit the community.

Ellen Sullivan wrote this guide.

FOREWARD TO PART ONE

by

Peter Kleinbard

CONFERENCE ON SEX, PREGNANCY AND RELATIONSHIPS

Our title will raise eyebrows and even bring rejection of the booklet by some who believe that young people have no business in the role of sex educators. As the NCRY participant in the planning process, I acknowledge my own reservations at first. I questionned whether so much effort should go into sex education when there are many other compelling issues for young people to address, for example: substance abuse and the quality of their education. I had doubts as to whether these young people, who seemed very knowledgeable, could possibly need *more* education on this subject.

What I learned while meeting with them for six months one evening a week is that their assessment was correct. Their knowledge of sex was, in many cases, inadequate to distinguish myth from facts; their curiosity and need for relationships far exceeded their knowledge about the needs of potential partners and, in some cases, of their own needs. Their ignorance is not unlike that of many adults when one thinks about it. The probing process of creating the conference in itself revealed a need for greater dialogue and knowledge among both youth and adult participants.

But these young people had an extra prod: more than 300 peers in a previous YAP conference had asked for more information about sex. Most research studies support this need. Early pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases are all too common among young people. Often they result from ignorance, not just of the facts of prevention, but of the lifetime consequences. Perhaps the most

devastating consequence is the failure of the majority of young unwed mothers to finish high school.

In order to present the facts on topics such as birth control, abortion and sterilization, the young planners sought out adult experts, oriented them and had them lead workshops. The young people have begun to follow up on this aspect of the conference with a newsletter that will highlight "myths" about sexuality and will describe where to get information or assistance.

But the planners were interested in a much broader range of issues than biological "plumbing and heating." They wanted to deepen their own and their peers' understanding about relationships. To that end, they provided structured Dialogues -- discussion groups -- about marriage, male-female relationships, and other issues. To follow up on this aspect of the conference, YAP established on-going peer counseling groups.

As both a participant and observer, I came to appreciate the enormous value of the knowledge that these young people were providing to their peers through the conference and follow-up activities. But I believe that the greater service was in demonstrating that young people themselves could make a concrete, positive difference in their community by putting on a well organized, large-scale event. We know that many of the problems of adolescents stem from a feeling of being useless and unimportant. Early pregnancy may be the clearest case: the young woman who bears a child so that she will be important to someone; the young man who points to his now unwanted progeny as evidence of his power and ability to make a difference. In the conference, young people demonstrated a constructive effort to help each other and to improve their surroundings. We know that the belief that one can take control of his/her own destiny is critical to healthy social development. What better way to learn than through a project like this one?

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:

Putting on a conference or other event provides an excellent means to develop the capacity for participation and leadership. The Conference on Sex, Pregnancy and Relationships offered opportunities for the planners to:

- Respond positively and concretely to deeply felt community problems
- Exercise a range of skills, with less experienced youth able to take on simpler tasks and the more skilled assume leadership roles
- Complete a complex range of tasks that contributed to a project with definite scale and duration
- Create an event that brought clear assessments from their peers and the community
- Work collaboratively with peers and adults

One could cite other benefits as well. We stress these because, regrettably, they are all too rarely experienced by young people in any community. Most schools stress passive absorption of knowledge. Few community agencies provide opportunities to organize events and most of these events focus on fulfilling the organizer's rather than the community's needs.

Here, we wish to stress especially the value of *planning that has a concrete outcome.* Too often young people are asked to participate in developing policy or plans, but don't do anything. *Youth councils, youth policy councils, and citizen councils, community participation councils:* too often, adults entice young people with promises of making a real impact on the community when, in the end, neither the adults nor the young people who participate find that they have been the least bit empowered.

In considering youth involvement on a council or other policy group, adults must ask themselves; "Realistically, can these young people make a difference? In our deliberations? In our actions?"

Whether the answer is yes or no, the young people being asked to participate should be told.

Many agencies request assistance from NCRY to help make Youth Participation work. We advise those who want to establish what we call "talking councils" to consider some concrete way the young people can participate: for example, by evaluating field sites of an employment project and *then* participating in further planning. Through their visits and observations, the young people will have a basis on which to make concrete recommendations that adults are likely to take seriously. And, if the adults permit the young people to visit and evaluate field sites, it is a good sign they are ready to listen to their opinions.

The Conference on Sex, Pregnancy and Relationships illustrates how the Youth Action Project has developed a means by which young people can be full participants in planning *and* in action. The conference itself and many of the processes illustrated in this guide are suggestive of ways that other agencies can help young people to assume meaningful roles in their community.

CONFERENCE ON SEX, PREGNANCY AND RELATIONSHIPS
BY YOUTH -- FOR YOUTH

On August 19, 1982, 250 young people and adults attended a day long conference on sex education. The conference included discussions about relationships, marriage and other important issues. There were expert speakers on topics such as birth control, abortion and sterlilization.

The conference was planned and put on by young people from East Harlem's Youth Action Program.

Sound interesting? Would you like to stage your own conference on sex education? This manual is designed to teach young people how to plan a conference and to offer advice to the adults working with them on how to provide support.

GETTING STARTED

I. HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

II. PLANNING

III. USING A CONSULTANT TO HELP YOU

GETTING STARTED

I. HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide will be most helpful if you read through it quickly, first. Then, as you begin planning, flip to those sections with information directly relevant to your needs. In planning a conference, you will often be undertaking several tasks at once. You may have to find space, begin publicity, and get speakers all at the same time. Thus, while there is a sequence to planning, there is a lot of overlap and concurrent activity and you may find it useful to flip back and forth in the guide.

The guide does not offer detailed descriptions of how to carry out each step in planning and implementation. Rather, we describe those steps that seem most essential and stress the role of young people, particularly.

The guide is based on the sex education conference of the Youth Action Program in East Harlem. You will find many boxed quotations and anecdotes from YAP. These are meant to expand and develop certain steps in the planning. We offer them as examples, not as prescriptions. You may find that different approaches work for your organization. And, if you do, NCRY would like to learn about them.

II. PLANNING

Planning is what will turn your idea for a sex education conference into an actual event. To be successful, you must do three things:

- Define and carry out the necessary tasks;
- Establish good working relationships and procedures
- Develop youth participation and leadership

First, there are specific tasks to be done. You must decide what will go on at the conference -- the topics, the format, the feeling. Resource people and experts in sex education must be identified and recruited. You must find a place to hold the conference, get a public address system, arrange for refreshments and perhaps music. The conference must be publicized to ensure an audience of the size you want. We have divided these planning tasks into *preliminary planning tasks* and *main planning tasks*. We will describe them in more detail in Sections II and V of this manual.

Second, you must put together a group to carry out these tasks. The planning group must be able to work together well. Running interesting and productive meetings, making decisions that are well thought out and accepted by all, assigning tasks and ensuring they are completed, handling conflicts and disagreements, making sure everyone knows what is happening, and evaluating your actions and accomplishments during and after the planning all contribute to good group functioning. We will discuss each of these processes in Section IV.

Finally, developing Youth Participation requires certain approaches on the part of adults and young people. Section III is devoted to these strategies. In addition, suggestions are interspersed throughout the body of the text.

III. USING A CONSULTANT TO HELP YOU

Although we are presenting a planning model for you to follow, you may decide to employ someone to help you.

The consultant may be an adult or a youth; the important thing is that you find someone who can get along with your group, understand your needs, and has expertise in planning.

> *In the first conference YAP planned (on East Harlem youth leadership) the youth coordinators recognized they wanted a large conference, but didn't have sufficient expertise to bring it off. They interviewed consultants and hired one with extensive experience with both Youth Participation and conference planning. They looked for:*
>
> - *skills in putting on a conference*
> - *ability to relate to people, especially youth*
> - *ability to relate to people in the East Harlem community*
> - *flexibility*
> - *someone with a clear sense of what is practical to accomplish in the time available*

The YAP consultant, an adult, worked closely with the two youth coordinators at first. Although he might have "saved time" by simply handing the young people a list of the necessary tasks, he wanted to train them so that they would have a model they could implement without adult help in the future.

> *The second conference YAP put on was the sex education conference. The 19-year old coordinator was able to use the planning model and process he had learned from the consultant, and required little adult intervention.*

FIRST STEPS

I. CLARIFYING THE NEED, PURPOSE, AND GOALS

II. CHARTING THE PLANNING PROCESS

III. FORMING A PLANNING GROUP

I. CLARIFYING THE NEED, PURPOSE, AND GOALS

The Youth Action Program participants asked of themselves and then of their planning group:

- *Why have a conference? What's important?*
- *What's the greatest thing that can happen at the conference?*
- *What is it we want to come out of the conference?*

Ask yourselves these questions:

- Why a sex education conference?
- Who are the "we" that see this need?
- Who is our audience -- who are we trying to reach?
- What do we want this conference to accomplish?

The Youth Action Program had already done some preliminary thinking about the need for sex education. Their first conference on East Harlem youth leadership had recommended:

- *More sex education: dialogues between young men and women, discussion of attitudes towards sexuality everywhere -- at school, at home, and in programs; more workshops, more communication between men and men, women and women, between partners, and in the family.*
- *More outreach to inform people of clinics, sex education, and birth control.*
- *Some kind of attention to helping people develop and sustain relationships based on mutual respect, serious relationships in which people are honest and not exploiting each other.*

➤ADVICE TO ADULT CONSULTANTS AND ADVISORS: It may take longer if you help youth to learn the process rather than simply telling them what to do. But you will provide invaluable understanding of how to plan, organize, and turn ideas into reality.

➤MAXIM: Planning always takes longer than you think it should. Planning by young people, and teaching them the process at the same time, will take still longer. It is wise to figure from 1/3 to 1/2 again as much time as you would allocate if you were not involving youth.

➤ STEP 1: DRAW FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

Start out by thinking personally about your own needs, those of your friends, and of other young people you know.

The 18-year old woman who made the keynote speech at YAP's conference describes why she thought the conference was vitally important:

I believed that sex education is top priority for young people, especially in this community. I can remember hanging out with the girls in my building. We're all about the same age -- 18 or 19, now. Maybe one or two are married, and most have kids. They really seem miserable. They don't laugh anymore, don't hang out anymore.

I'm 18 too, but I didn't have kids. The difference was that I was educated about it beforehehand by school, myself, my friends.

There's a real difference in attitudes now between those girls and me. They think it's unfair that they're stuck and I'm not, since we all had the same opportunities. One girl in particular who lives on my floor -- I've known her for eight years. I've seen her have 3, maybe 4 abortions. She finally had the baby, who's 4 years old now. This girl used to be so full of energy. Now she looks so old, so tired, so out of it. A lot of the girls are on welfare, and a lot don't have a high school diploma.

I think they're in this situation not only because they weren't educated, but also because they wanted to hang onto a guy -- which, of course, never works.

I think it's terrible, because it all could have been avoided. So that's why I think there was a need for this conference, and why I spoke about how young people must:

- *get information*
- *take responsibility*
- *think about relationships, and what's really important in a relationship with another person.*

In my speech, I was trying to let people know, and especially the younger guys and girls, that it

doesn't have to happen -- that you don't have to get into bad or unhappy relationships, and that you don't have to get pregnant before you're ready to. I told them to get educated, listen to this conference, and to the clinics and agencies who are represented here to get help and information.

➤STEP 2: IDENTIFY THE NEEDS FROM THE GROUP'S EXPERIENCE

From this first step of sharing personal experiences, you can then list the problems and reasons why young people need this conference. For example, reflecting on the YAP speaker's story, we might come up with the following:

- young people are not well informed about birth control;
- young people may know about birth control, but do not use it;
- girls get pregnant for the wrong reasons;
- girls who get pregnant and have the baby may not know what they're getting into;
- guys and girls have different ideas about relationships and what they want from them, and this causes problems;
- young people are not aware of or do not use the services which could help them with decisions about sexuality, pregnancy and abortion, etc.

➤STEP 3: DEFINE THE PURPOSE AND GOALS OF THE CONFERENCE

What would you like the conference to do about the problems and needs you have identified? What is important to tell people about? What do you want people to learn at the conference? Sample goals might include:

- to provide information to participants about birth control, pregnancy, abortion, relationships, etc.
- to give people a chance to discuss sensitive issues and problems in a supportive setting

- to connect young people to the agencies and health services which could help them
- to break down myths and correct misinformation.

II. CHARTING THE PLANNING PROCESS

You have limited time in which to get everything ready for your conference. Mapping out the weeks ahead will make life easier. You'll know what needs to be done, and by whom, and so will every one else.

➤ STEP 1: SET A DATE AND WORK BACKWARDS

Select a day and time for the conference. Until you do this, you won't be able to make any of the arrangements such as getting space, equipment, or experts and agencies to commit themselves to participate. Also, once you have a date, your work takes on a sense of urgency and purpose.

When choosing a date, think about when you are likely to get the largest turnout of your target audience. Is a weekend better? Or a night? Are there any other activities that might conflict and draw people away?

➤ STEP 2: LIST NECESSARY TASKS

Brainstorm a list of all the tasks you need to do between now and the day of the conference. You can start with the big areas and then add the specifics, or else jot down whatever job, big or little, pops into your head. For example, the YAP planners did the broad breakdowns first, such as:

- content
- who will be the speakers?
- what is the day going to look like?
- publicity
- equipment
- space
- cleaning up

They then identified the specific tasks associated with each area.

- Example:
  1. identify topics
  2. identify expert speakers

3. contact and get commitments from experts
4. identify youth moderators
5. train youth moderators

➤ STEP 3: MAKE A WEEK BY WEEK SCHEDULE OF TASKS

An easy way to do this is on newsprint posted around the walls of the room. Label each newsprint page Week 1, Week 2, Week 3, etc., until you reach the number of weeks you have left until your conference date.

List all the tasks which will need to be done in those weeks. You can either leave these sheets posted, make a more refined chart on poster cardboard, or shrink it down to the size of regular paper that can be copied for all the participants in the planning process.

Your timeline may look something like the one the YAP planners put together:

Week 1: Set up planning group

- *Contact youth*
- *Contact adults*
- *Establish regular meeting time*

Week 2: Hold first planning meeting

- *Have group members learn to know each other*
- *Discuss conference objectives*
- *Assign first follow-up tasks*

etc.

➤ STEP 4: DECIDE WHAT YOU WANT TO DO YOURSELF AND WHAT YOU NEED TO FARM OUT TO OTHERS

Look over the list of tasks you have compiled and the schedule. Ask these questions:

- Who do we have to do these tasks?
- What will we do ourselves?
- What do we have to farm out?
- What do we need to get?

STEP 5: DO DAILY PLANS

If you are the coordinator, you will need to do day-by-day lists of what must get done. At the beginning of each day, review your master chart, and list what to do that day. You may find that on some days you can't get through your list, and have to put it on your list for tomorrow. Don't worry -- this happens to everyone. The important thing is to complete each task.

Sample List -- Day #4

- *Call members of planning committee to set meeting*
- *Arrange for space and refreshments at meeting*
- *Prepare agenda for meeting*

III. FORMING A PLANNING GROUP

We are assuming that the conference will be coordinated by a young person, possibly with the help of an adult facilitator. Beyond this, the composition of the planning committee depends on what you want to accomplish.

There are a number of possible categories of people you might consider to participate in the planning. Besides young people, these include:

- experts in sex education
- representatives of youth-serving organizations
- representatives of health care organizations such as Planned Parenthood, or clinics serving teenagers
- experts in planning (youth and adults)

You may decide to form a planning group with representatives from all these categories who meet regularly on all the issues that arise in the planning. The advantage is that you guarantee their participation and increase their investment in the planning and the conference. The disadvantage is that you may have to spend a lot of time building the group into an effective working committee and must take time to keep everyone informed.

A different model is to use a small group comprising only young people with an adult facilitator. They connect with the experts and representatives as needed, but do not necessarily meet regularly. This approach may be more efficient, but you may not get the exchange of information and ideas you would get from the larger group.

➤ STEP 1: REVIEW YOUR GOALS AND PURPOSE

> *In the first conference they planned, on youth leadership, YAP formed a planning group consisting of YAP youth and adults, plus representatives from community agencies and youth organizations. Each meeting had approximately 20 people, with membership changing over time. Although this took a good deal of coordination and communication, the structure supported the goal of building a network of community organizations and connecting them to youth which would last beyond the conference itself.*

➤ STEP 2: EVALUATE THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE WITHIN YOUR CORE PLANNING GROUP

Ask yourselves whether you need to involve people with specific expertise in how to plan, in the content of the conference, or in developing youth leadership. You may make a chart of the skills you think will be needed, and determine whether it is necessary to include additional people in a planning group or whether you can call on them to advise you as needed.

ENSURING YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP

I. DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP

II. HELPING YOUTH TO SPEAK OUT CLEARLY

ENSURING YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP

I. DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP

There are many ways to encourage Youth Participation and to develop leadership capabilities. The Youth Action Program, which is run jointly by youths and adults, has young people participating in all decisions of the organization including hiring and firing. The Director describes their approach:

> *We give young people decisionmaking responsibility at the earliest possible moment with no preparation. Our assumption is that people can think and have good perceptions if you draw them out. We encourage adults here to draw the young people out, and we build an atmosphere of respect.*
>
> *If that works well, people who have been put down realize their worth quickly. Some in the group have been waiting for such an opportunity and emerge quickly as articulate leaders. Others may be more reticent, more worried, less confident, don't speak so well.*
>
> *Verbal proficiency is something a lot of kids have and kids can be taught.*
>
> *Once we have them participating, people are invited to chair meetings, to handle the group. They learn through observing someone else first; when they move into the role, we'll provide help as the meeting is going on, a kind of coaching in-process:*
>
> *Now get an agenda on the board*
> *Now put the items in order*
> *Now assign them a time*
> *etc.*
>
> *No one minds this in-process coaching. We also provide help at the end of the meeting in our evaluations of the process.*
>
> *We do a lot of saying yes to people who say "I can do it." We ask, "What kind of help do you need?"*

➤ STEP 1: GIVE YOUTH DECISIONMAKING RESPONSIBILITY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE

➤ STEP 2: DEVELOP LEADERSHIP THROUGH PARTICIPATION, OBSERVATION, TRAINING AND PRACTICE

The 19 year old coordinator of the YAP's sex education conference described how he went through a process of getting training and skills that took a year. This enabled him to plan and implement the conference with very little help from adults. There were three stages in this process:

- *Participation: he came to meetings, observed how they were run, did mailings, then did the keynote speech at a youth fair.*
- *Assisting, chairing meetings, chairing committees. He assisted the planning for the youth leadership conference and learned a systematic process from the adult consultant hired to aid the planning.*
- *Total responsibility as coordinator of the Conference on Sex, Pregnancy and Relationships.*

➤ STEP 3: BALANCE ADULT PARTICIPATION WITH TWICE AS MUCH YOUTH PARTICIPATION

To ensure Youth Participation in the planning group:

When adults are involved in the planning, it is important that youth be represented in large enough numbers so as not to become token representatives or subordinate to the adults. YAP's technique was to ask each agency that participated in the planning to bring two young people with them to the meetings and the planning.

➤ STEP 4: PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR THE YOUTH LEADERS

It is important that an adult stay in close touch with the youth leader and discuss problems and issues that arise on a regular basis.

> *The YAP coordinator for the sex education conference needed little help in designing the planning process itself. But he admitted the need for " a lot of internal YAP support. I needed help from the adult staff on things like making contacts. I went to the staff meetings of adults to get suggestions and feedback. I was constantly bugging people for contacts and ideas. Every day I talked to people about the conference. I let people know what I needed and by when."*

II. HELPING YOUNG PEOPLE SPEAK OUT CLEARLY

Part of good leadership is being able to speak effectively and forcefully. The Youth Action Program concentrates on developing these skills. According to the adult Director:

> *We try to give people a chance to speak publicly as often as possible, at public meetings, at speak-outs, at meetings. This really deals with the confidence issue. Sometimes we help someone prepare what they're going to say. I'll sit at the typewriter and ask, "What is it you want to say?" I'll listen and sift, and when the ideas start to come together I'll start to type. Then they'll edit that. If they're unsure of themselves, they may hold their notes while speaking, but often they'll start to take off without needing the paper.*
>
> *Sometimes we'll give people a really thorough feedback, if it's for a major event. For example, Johnny spent two sessions with the group working on his keynote address for the first conference. We worked on content and presentation.*
>
> *Learning to present oneself in public -- to speak and feel confident : we create situations for newcomers where the risks aren't too high at first.*

An atmosphere of respect and support from adults and other youth can encourage those who might be reticent to speak in public.

> *At their first conference, a broad-ranging conference on issues of concern to East Harlem youth, YAP had an open speak-out where young people and adults spoke for two minutes each about what they believed were the most pressing concerns facing youth. They made a rule that for every adult who spoke, two youths would have a turn.*
>
> *"We made it so people would really share what was on their minds and in their hearts," said the young conference coordinator and keynote speaker. People raised their hands and got up to speak. "One girl was scared to come up by herself, so she brought a friend up with her. The audience gave her a lot of support and encouragement. Every time a young person spoke, the audience cheered."*

ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE PLANNING GROUP

I. GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

II. RUNNING MEETINGS

III. MAKING DECISIONS

IV. COMMUNICATION

V. REFLECTION

VI. HANDLING DISAGREEMENTS AND CONFLICTS

ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE PLANNING GROUP

It is not enough to select participants, call it a committee, and expect that all will run smoothly from that point on. It takes careful thinking to turn a number of individuals into a cohesive unit that works well together, makes intelligent decisions, provides support and assistance, sets and maintains high standards, and gets the work done.

I. GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

➤ STEP 1: INTRODUCE YOURSELVES

At your first planning meeting, set aside a fair amount of time to learn something about your new co-workers. You can do this in a simple, straightforward way by introducing yourself and making a short statement about your skills, interests, or why you're involved in this planning effort. Or, you can have the group engage in an "icebreaking" exercise.

For example:

> *Give everyone a 3 x 5 index card. Have each person write his or her name in the center. In the upper left hand corner write down what you like to do best in life -- play the piano, read, play basketball, etc. In the upper right hand corner put down the person you admire most -- someone you know personally or someone who is famous. In the lower left, put down what special skills or interests you have that might further the planning; and in the lower right put down some weakness or problem that you think might get in the way of the planning (such as not liking to follow through, or disliking meetings).*

Pin your card to your shirt, and take ten or fifteen minutes to circulate around the room and read everyone's card. Beforehand, the group can decide whether this circulating will be done silently, or whether you can chat and ask questions while you're reading.

At the end of the circulating time, focus on each person in the group in turn, and talk a little about your impressions of one another.

➤STEP 2: DISCUSS YOUR INDIVIDUAL STYLES OF WORKING

People work differently. It's important to know how your co-planners work best and most effectively. Some people like to work alone, while others prefer to work in pairs or as part of a team. Perhaps you would rather work a limited number of hours each day every day, while someone else might work best in an intensive spurt. You may be a last-minute type, but another planning member may get terribly anxious when tasks are not done well in advance of deadlines. Some people need a lot of instruction and support all through a task, while others are self-starters and want only a few guidelines at the outset. Some people have good ideas, but need a group meeting to stimulate their creative thinking.

There is no one right way. Where there are differences in style, you can decide how to accomodate to one another's needs. If starting meetings late drives you crazy, make it clear to the group that this is important to you, and try to get some agreement that you will start meetings on time. And so on. Getting these preferences out in the open at the beginning will help you avoid tensions and conflict later on.

You may not have enough experience with this kind of planning to know just how you'll react, or what your optimal working style is. That's not unusual. Just try to be conscious that you have a style, and be aware when things you do or don't do help or hinder the group's efforts. Share your reactions with the group, or with the individuals whose actions affect you.

- Get together with the core planning group, the youth leaders and any adult facilitators, and talk about your expectations for the conference, of one another, and of the different ways each of you goes about working and getting things done.

> *The two youth coordinators had different approaches to the planning of the East Harlem youth leadership conference. One was very systematic and methodical while the other felt it was important to hold on to a larger vision and think about creating a good spirit. This difference did not become clear until it had created some tension.*

In fact, both approaches were necessary to produce a well run and exciting event. But the coordinators did not fully realize this and were not clear about how much and what kind of information other participants needed to feel confident about their different emphases.

➤ STEP 3: BUILD IN TIME TO REFLECT ON HOW YOUR GROUP IS WORKING TOGETHER

Time for reflection is important when you're planning. Things are moving fast,and you're usually very involved in the tasks at hand. You may not realize until too late that you have not attended to others' needs. It is wise to set aside a regular time to reflect on how the planning is going; this could be at the beginning or end of each meeting, or as a separate meeting. You can also make a rule that when anyone begins to feel tense or angry about these working styles, the group will respond immediately, despite pressing jobs or tasks.

II. RUNNING MEETINGS

Whether you work as a small core group or as part of a larger planning group, meetings will be a part of your experience. Running meetings is a skill that can be learned.

Meeting Structure. The Youth Action Program has a definite sequence to the way they run their meetings. Their process may be helpful to you.

HOW TO RUN GOOD MEETINGS*

GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PROCESS

Assuming that you have an effective person in charge, here are some specific suggestions for how that person can handle meetings to make them enjoyable and fruitful:

- *Set a regular meeting time and place which is most convenient for the majority. Occasionally meet at a time or place more convenient for the minority.*
- *Notify everyone of the meeting as personally as is necessary to get them there. Know who is expected and who is not coming.*
- *Provide transportation and childcare if it will help.*
- *Have some refreshments.*
- *Make sure everyone knows everyone. Don't ever start a meeting without being sure everyone at least has a chance to know each other's name and a little about each other.*
- *Start with people making personal contact. (They might each take a turn saying what's new in their lives, or something informal like that.) If this is not possible make sure you touch base with everyone yourself before the formal start of the meeting, letting them know how welcome they are.*
- *Start on time. Otherwise some people will make a habit of coming late. Others will be resentful*

* This section was written by Dorothy Stoneman, Director of the Youth Action Program and reprinted with her permission.

that their time is being wasted, waiting. Starting on time is a way of respecting people's busy schedules. The late people will soon learn that you do start on time and most of them will find a way to get there.

- *End on time. This is also an important way of respecting people's lives.*
- *Welcome late-comers, introduce them and explain to them what you are doing at the moment.*
- *Inform the group of why the absent people could not come -- this establishes that they are still part of the group. It also establishes the expectation that people will contact you if they have to be absent.*
- *Have a planned, visible agenda, with important content. If people feel the chairperson is using their time purposefully they tend to be more responsible in their own use of the meeting's time.*
- *Post the estimated time for each agenda item so people can be aware of when to move on. If something unexpectedly emerges as very important, people can then decide whether to postpone other agenda items, stay late, call another meeting, etc.*
- *If possible let people know in advance what important issues are to be decided. Avoid letting some people know and not others!*
- *Make back-up information available as appropriate. This helps new members participate fully.*
- *Include in your agenda review of every specific responsibility that has been previously assigned and is still hanging. If someone volunteered to do something, see if it was done, or if not what help is needed. (Move this quickly; if necessary arrange to give help outside the meeting.) If you already know it was done, appreciate the person or give him or her a chance to report.*

  The group needs to know that everything is being moved forward and that responsibilities are not dropped.
- *On every important decision make sure every person speaks fully. Every person has important things to say, no matter how shy s/he is. Let nobody dominate discussion; let nobody be overlooked.*

  A healthy group listens to the thinking of all its members -- or it ends up losing the ones who have not been heard.
- *If one or more people remain withdrawn from the discussion, contact them personally before the*

next meeting to hear what they were thinking. They may have had important objections to voice which they did not feel comfortable expressing to the group, and they may need your support in raising these points. Whatever people's reasons, it will be important that you care enough to check in with them, and it will help you to know their thinking.

- *On every important decision, try to reach consensus. Discuss until all important objections to the dominant view have been shared and explored. Discuss until the minority who disagree have been thoroughly heard and taken seriously.*

  If enthusiastic consensus cannot be reached, ask the disagreeing minority if they will consent to go along with the decision and review it after there has been time to test it in practice. If discussion has been thorough, this minority should be small, because the best ideas will have been incorporated into the majority position.

- *Make sure that, over time, no important idea of concern gets repeatedly dropped. A group needs to make progress on all fronts. Even if your resources force you to make slower progress on some fronts than others, this should be stated explicitly and a plan followed for when and how the concern will be handled.*

  Otherwise morale will be lowered by the feeling that the group, or the leader, is inadequate to handle the whole task. As a result your other excellent work may be eroded by the weakness that develops from continually putting aside the less urgent concerns.

- *Encourage laughter in your meetings. Serious discussions can get boring or tense; jokes and lightheartedness lift the spirits and bring people together. The work goes faster when people are more relaxed and tuned in.*

- *At the end of every meeting, take a few minutes for a closing evaluation. Even a sentence from each person on how the meeting went -- what s/he liked or what could be improved or how s/he feels -- will do. This gives you valuable information for planning, and gives the group a sense of completeness and connectedness. Nobody has to leave wondering how the others felt. If everyone likes the meeting morale goes up 100% when this becomes evident.*

- *Keep good minutes of your meetings and make sure to distribute them to all absent members plus all others who have reason to know of your progress. Much good work is wasted by not communicating it to the people who care.*

All of the above are important. They all seem obvious once stated, but many groups struggle along for years without ever putting their attention on these important parts of working together. You can save a lot of disappointment by following these suggestions.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT SOME PEOPLE TALKING TOO MUCH AND SOME PEOPLE TALKING TOO LITTLE

People who talk too much often feel uneasy about dominating, and quiet people usually feel embarrassed about being shy. Both groups appreciate a structure that balances things out.

Some ideas:

- *On a controversial issue use "equal time" where everyone gets to speak for a certain number of minutes on the topic before there is back-and-forth discussion. Often the group as a whole will put out all the pros and cons in an impressive way through this process, so no one has to feel it is up to him or her to say everything, and everyone can feel impressed with how well the group is functioning as a whole.*
- *Sometimes use a discussion rule: nobody speaks twice before everybody has spoken once; and nobody speaks four times before everyone has spoken twice. Explain that in fact everyone has important things to say, and the group needs a structure allowing everyone to speak so that no one has to jump in or interrupt in order to be heard.*
- *Whenever someone has been very quiet, ask if s/he has anything to add or any thoughts to share on the subject. Many times people will speak when asked, when otherwise they would consider their thoughts unimportant.*
- *Take time to explore thoroughly all points of view -- this will cut down on conflict and tension because people will know a rational process is being followed and they will stay calmer.*

These four techniques prevent interrupting and emotional two-way dialogues; they establish an attitude of respect and listening.

- *HOW TO BUILD TRUST AND MORALE*

All groups suffer from under-appreciation. People work hard, do their best, and nobody ever mentions

it. But the mistakes they make are often mentioned!

Make sure people get appreciation for their work. It is a great boost occasionally to structure in a time of appreciation where everyone gets to hear from two or three other people what they appreciate about their contribution to the group's work. If this sounds too corny or formal, try it and see how people begin to chuckle and bubble and feel relief. To make people's need for appreciation an acceptable thing, shared by everyone, has a wonderful effect on a group.

TO BUILD MORALE IN MEETINGS

- Listen to everyone's point of view.
- Actively appreciate people's work and contributions.
- Follow through on all tasks assigned.
- Be well organized and prepared.
- Encourage laughter.
- Try to reach consensus.
- Briefly evaluate each meeting.

RESEARCH FOR DECISIONS

We've mentioned the importance of providing background information for important decisions and of giving all group members a chance to express their opinions. After doing this, it may be clear that there are still gaps in the facts available to people, and that no consensus can be reached without further research.

Appropriate research could be consulting with experts, tracking down documents from the funding agency, calling staff or parents or consultants to give reports, reviewing back minutes, et cetera. The important thing is to make decisions based on full and accurate information gleaned not only from routine reports but also from other sources as needed. Pushing for a decision before getting the relevant information is usually a mistake.

FOLLOW-THROUGH

This, of course, is the final hurdle. So many wonderful decisions are made through hard work and discussion; and so many decisions never get implemented because there is no follow-through between meetings.

Make sure somebody is responsible for actually doing the things you have decided should be done. Break it down, person by person, piece by piece.

III. MAKING DECISIONS

➤ DECIDING HOW TO DECIDE: You will be making many decisions as you plan your conference. Before you start, you need to decide how you will decide. There are lots of methods, such as the "majority rules" approach most of us were taught as children. But when you're working as a group, you want more than a simple majority.

Consensus is a decisionmaking method that seeks to gain agreement from all members. It involves discussion and negotiation in an attempt to find out where everyone stands on an issue and how to alter the decision to satisfy all.

In consensus decisionmaking:*

> *A preliminary proposal is made and an informal poll is taken to get everyone's reaction. Those who disagree then suggest how the proposal could be changed to be more acceptable to them. Another poll is taken on the new proposal, more alterations are made, more views expressed, and so on until finally the proposal satisfies everyone.*
>
> *Consensus decisionmaking requires that equal weight be given to all opinions, regardless of who states them...* [It requires] *that those in disagreement offer ideas for improving the proposal. Consensus does not work when members are silent or passive.*
>
> *STEPS IN DECISIONMAKING*
>
> - *STEP 1: DEFINE THE SITUATION*
> - *STEP 2: GATHER DATA*
> - *STEP 3: SUGGEST ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS*
> - *STEP 4: TEST THE ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS*
> - *STEP 5: CHOOSE AMONG (OR REVISE) ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS*

* This section is excerpted from Taylor, *Mapping New Schools*, Center for Policy Research, New York, 1980, Volume I, pp. 37-40.

➤ AIDS TO GROUP DECISIONMAKING

Making group decisions calls for skill and practice. Some aspects of decisionmaking skill also serve as a reminder of things to keep in mind:

-Everyone should be clear on what type of decisionmaking model the group is using at a given time (Majority vote? Unanimity? Consensus?).
-There should be willingness to hear and consider minority or unusual ideas.
-Use the group's resources by hearing all members' ideas.
-Assess alternative solutions by using "what if" thinking.
-Everyone should be clear on the decision that is reached and how it will be put into action.

➤ ROLE OF THE LEADER IN GROUP DECISIONMAKING

It is a mistake to think that the formal leader of the group makes all of the decisions that guide the planning and implementation activities.

Rather, the leader's role can be likened to that of the stage manager. That is, the leader sets the stage, creates the conditions in which good decisionmaking can thrive. While group decisionmaking can be time-consuming and often nerve-wracking, its great advantage is to relieve the leader of the full burden of responsibility for making and implementing decisions. The group that is highly involved in making decisions "owns" those decisions and is committed to carrying them out.

Not all decisions need to be made by the group. But the leader must think carefully about decision areas: Which should he or she make? Which should key people or subgroups make? Which should the whole group make?

The leader (a role which might be a rotating one or a fixed one) is actually a facilitator or coordinator of the group who:

- Guides discussions and processes
- Encourages all members to participate

- Exhibits acceptance of others' ideas by being non-critical
- Requests or offers clarification of others' views
- Encourages the airing of conflicts and the group's attempts to help in their resolution
- Seeks group reactions to ideas before even considering their implementation
- Relates the values and aims of individual members to the overall planning vision
- Summarizes discussions and decisions
- Inspires and encourages members with the belief that the group can and will do what they set out to do
- Keeps things moving

The main issue that the leader must consider is this:

IS THE RIGHT PERSON OR GROUP MAKING THE DECISION?

Leaders ordinarily have a license to allocate decisions -- to decide who should decide. But that license can be revoked if it is exercised unwisely or arbitrarily.

IV. COMMUNICATION

It is important to keep planning members informed about what is happening and what is expected. Otherwise, people don't know what they're supposed to do, think that others are not doing their jobs, or get left out of decisions and meetings in which their participation is needed.

For example, the problem between the YAP coordinators of the East Harlem Youth Conference was really caused by inadequate communication. Said one of the leaders:

> *I was acting alone, doing a lot of outreach, on phone a lot. I didn't report to the others, but assumed they were in touch. They thought I was being irresponsible and not doing anything. I realized later that they needed to be kept informed about my activities. In our evaluation the others said that the conference worked and my ideas worked but that they had needed to know what I was doing.*

➤ STEP 1: SET UP A COMMUNICATION SYSTEM TO KEEP ALL PARTICIPANTS INFORMED

It may be enough to have verbal reports from each participant at meetings, and keep a written record of decisions, actions, and assignments. If your membership is constantly changing, then you probably need written minutes of meetings, summarizing discussions as well as decisions, actions and assignments.

There are other strategies for keeping everyone posted. A blackboard or chart with the planning schedule and the daily responsibilities is one idea. Distributing timelines to all group members is another. A communal notebook containing goals, minutes, and any comments participants wish to make is a third.

After you establish a structure for communication, check periodically to make sure that everyone is getting all the information

he or she needs to do the job.

➤ STEP 2: LEARN HOW TO LISTEN

Another aspect of communication is learning how to listen to what others are saying, and to get the most out of each person's contribution. The Director of YAP passes on some of her operating rules:

- *Listen carefully to what each person has to say, whether you agree with all of it or not.*
- *Listen for the part of what s/he's saying that is new and important, which has never been brought to your attention before, and let him or her know that it's important.*
- *Listen for the "piece of truth" in any criticism, rather than becoming defensive.*
- *Hear the person's whole point of view, asking questions to get it all clear, for yourself, before you explain what you also want him or her to understand.*
- *Talk to someone immediately about any misunderstanding or hurt between you or any mess-up in the work.*
- *Refuse to believe any rumor without checking it out.*
- *Get back to people with further information, or with your report of what you did in response to their complaints or suggestions (don't be a dead-end. Move things and let people know they've been heard).*
- *Tell people when you've seen or heard something they did well (give people the appreciation they deserve. Don't take anyone's positive input for granted. People get tired).*
- *Avoid passing on any negative gossip, but do pass on all compliments or praise.*
- *Tell people (simply) why you're doing what you're doing, so they will not have to guess or jump to to conclusions.*

V. REFLECTION

Reflection is a way to share your thoughts about what you've been doing with your co-workers. By thinking and talking about your activities, learning, and relationships, you make clear to yourself and others what is most important for you, what you should be doing more of, what needs to be improved, and what went well. Reflection helps to set and maintain high standards and to keep your group functioning effectively.

There are several ways to encourage reflection in your group. You can:

- Set aside time at the beginning and/or end of each meeting to comment about whatever is on your mind, or to discuss how you're feeling about a particular subject or issue;
- Keep logs. Individuals can jot down personal reactions during the planning that are shared with others either face to face or by placing them in a communal notebook;
- Practice self-evaluation. "I look at things as if they could have been better," says the YAP coordinator. "I do constant evaluation and reflection." Look at your handling of tasks with as much distance as you can, as someone else might see it. Look at what you've done well just as carefully as you look at what you might have done better. You can learn as much if not more by analyzing what you did right, because then you can start to identify the elements that work and build on them.

VI. HANDLING DISAGREEMENTS AND CONFLICTS

Every planning group has problems and disagreements. The idea is to keep these tensions to a minimum by setting basic operating rules and establishing mechanisms for handling conflicts.

Agree to disagree, but keep talking. Sometimes it may be impossible to reach a consensus, but you still need to move ahead and take action. One approach is to clarify the majority and minority positions, acknowledge the minority position, and understand what lies behind it. Respect the disagreement, even if you cannot act on it. Respect the people who hold the minority position; don't put them down for their views. Keep trying to work out an acceptable compromise.

Try not to take things personally, and don't criticize others for personal characteristics. If you are dissatisfied with someone's work, offer constructive criticism of the work, not the person.

DO say: The flyer needs more information on the content of the conference.

DON'T say: You're sloppy and careless. You always leave out the important information.

If there is a personal problem between two group members, it may be better to have the two meet alone or with a third party to work it out. If the difficulty involves the whole group, or if there are factions which have formed within the group, then the resolution should involve the whole group.

Acknowledge tensions and assume that most can be resolved. If you are unhappy about the way the group is working or the planning is going, bring it up. Raise it in a meeting if it involves more than one or two others; bring the problem to the leader, or contact the other parties in the conflict directly.

Often, sharing concerns is itself a way of clearing the air, especially when it is done because you care about the group and the conference. Good intentions can do a great deal to ease bad feelings so you can get to the substance of the disagreement.

Call in a third party or an outside consultant if the conflict is too serious for you to handle. An outsider with expertise in conflict resolution can come into a situation that seems insoluble from the inside and offer an objective evaluation and solution.

THE MAIN PLANNING TASKS

I. DESIGN THE DAY

II. DECIDE ON CONTENT: TOPICS, ISSUES, QUESTIONS

III. DEVELOP A FORMAT

IV. CREATE A GOOD SPIRIT

THE MAIN PLANNING TASKS

We now come to the crux of the matter -- what you need to do to get the conference organized, designed, and advertised. You must accomplish the following during planning:

Design the Day
Identify Experts and Speakers
Decide on Outcomes
Take Care of Practical Details (Space, Equipment, etc.)
Advertise the Conference
Train Workshop and Session Leaders
Do It! The Day Arrives
Evaluate the Conference
Follow It Up: Keep the Learning Going

I. DESIGN THE DAY

What will go on at the conference must be carefully thought out, from the big vision to the minute by minute schedule. You will need to do at least four things:

-Create a Vision
-Decide on Content
-Develop a Format
-Personalize It to Reach Young People: Create a Spirit

➤ CREATE A VISION

What do you want the day to be like? To look like? To feel like? What do you as an individual think the day should be? What do you as a group see as the ideal event? How can you move this image from your mind to a clear plan shared by your group?

There are lots of ways you can stimulate your creative powers to develop a vision of the day. Here are a few possibilities:

- Pretend it is the day of the conference. Everything is going as planned. You are delighted. What's happening?
- Pretend it is the day of the conference. You are attending the conference, but you were not involved in the planning. You're just part of the audience.
- Do a group brainstorming session. Cover the walls with newsprint. Have group members share any ideas they have about what they want to go on. Write all the ideas on the newsprint, large and dark, so everyone can read them. Don't criticize or edit at this point. The ideas can be in any order and on any part of the day's design. When the group has exhausted its thinking, look over the ideas. What themes emerge? What seems to be important to the group?

- Try to come up with some statements about what the group wants the day to be like, such as "We want

there to be a lot of discussion between the speakers/presenters and the audience. We want people to feel free to share their ideas, feelings, information about sex education," or, "We want to create dialogues between men and women, parents and children, etc.," or, "We want people to be able to take home a lot of written information about birth control, and about agencies that provide services." And so forth.

Then refine the vision. This will take time. Go home, think about what went on. Have one or two or three people write up the group's first ideas, copy and distribute them. Keep adding and building and refining. And as you plan all the pieces of the conference, always remember the vision, the big picture.

II. DECIDE ON CONTENT: TOPICS, ISSUES, QUESTIONS

What are the issues you want the conference to address? What issues have been suggested by other members of your community? What questions do you want to be sure are answered?

The Youth Action Program used the following process:

> *First, they asked of themselves, "What do young people need? What do they say they need?" They came up with a list of topics on which teenagers need information such as birth control, abortion, pregnancy, relationships, VD, health care. Many questions had come up in their previous conference on leadership. They then had the planning members pose questions on each of the topics, as a way to start thinking about what they wanted each topic to include. These questions later became the basis for the workshop discussions.*

- Be aware of the potentially inflammatory nature of some of these issues. Sex education, teenage pregnancy, abortion, birth control, are all subjects about which some people -- youth and adults -- get very agitated. You need to anticipate problems that might arise.
- Be aware of the sensitive nature of some of these issues. You need to anticipate that some young people might be embarrassed to discuss these subjects. Think about how you can create a supportive and open atmosphere in which people can speak their minds.

Once you have a preliminary list of topics and questions, you can then call in some experts in the field -- health educators, abortion clinic counselors, birth control clinic counselors, gynecologists and nurses specializing in teenagers, VD clinic counselors, politicians and legislators who are active in issues of teenage sexuality and health care. They can advise you on ways to think about these topics, how to present them to an audience, what you might have left out, sources of information, and services that are available.

➤ IDENTIFY EXPERTS AND SPEAKERS

One purpose of your conference will be to provide young people with the accurate information about sex and pregnancy, and relationships. Although you may yourselves have some expertise in these areas, you will undoubtedly need to include adult professionals in both the planning of the conference and the actual presentations. How do you go about finding these people, and getting what you need from them? Here is a place young people will often need to rely on experienced adults whom they trust. These adults will help them make judgements about effective adult presenters.

To develop a preliminary list of contacts, think about all the people and organizations who you know are involved with young people, sex education, adolescent health care, and the politics of such sex education issues as abortion and birth control. For example, such a list might include:

- the local Planned Parenthood
- clinics of hospitals that deal especially with adolescents
- school personnel -- health education teachers, school nurses, science teachers, guidance counselors
- community health centers
- private physicians, particularly gynecologists, family care practitioners, and doctors specializing in adolescent health care
- city and state agencies, such as the Department of Social Services and the Department of Health. Check the telephone book under each department to see if there are special offices devoted to any of your concerns
- college and university departments of health education

Have a clear idea of what you want the contact person or organization to do. When you make a connection, and the person on the phone says he or she is interested in what you're doing, you may not know exactly what you want from that person until you talk to them more about their expertise. There are a number of different things you can ask for. For example:

- to participate in the planning group. Either have a date for a meeting already set, or tell the person you'll be back in touch as soon as a date and time are set.

- to act as a resource person or presenter at the conference. Tell them how you envision their role, and what you would like to see happen. Or, that you would like them to think about what an appropriate presentation might be. Or that you would like to get together and talk about appropriate roles.
- to provide you with technical information. Ask if they have any written information, readings, handouts, slide shows, films, etc. related to the topics you're interested in. Or if they would speak to you and your planning group about what you need to know about particular issues. Or if they would help develop a list of questions to ask about these subjects.
- to suggest other people you should contact and their phone numbers if they have time.

➤ DECIDE ON OUTCOMES

What do you want to come out of the conference? What do you want people to learn? What do you want to continue after the day has ended? Some possibilities might be:

- ongoing discussion groups
- written information and reports
- connections to health services and agencies

Keep a running record of the conference. Whatever products you decide to write or distribute, keeping minutes or tape recordings of the proceedings will supply you with a great deal of material with which to work.

> *The Youth Action Program recorded each session on tape and also assigned someone to prepare minutes. At the end of each session, they summarized what had gone on, and got the group to make a resolution about what should happen next on that issue.*

Prepare to evaluate and follow up the conference. A simple questionnaire for participants to enter their reactions and comments can give you further material for newsletters and ongoing discussion groups, as well as for publicity about the conference and ideas for planning additional events.

A questionnaire, like the one YAP designed, can also give people

ideas for continuing their involvement. The YAP evaluation form asks people to tell what activities they might become involved in as a result of this conference, and has a place for a checkmark or comment afterward, such as:

"Provide information to others....."

"Work with a group to put on a presentation....."

➤ TAKE CARE OF PRACTICAL DETAILS

We've talked a lot about vision, goals, spirit and design. Now we need to get down to the brass tacks and folding chairs.

First -- A Note On Being Resourceful

The adult consultant who helped the YAP planners points out that a conference like this doesn't have to cost much. "For the equipment and supplies you need, don't overlook contributions and donations from local merchants, organizations, schools, and churches. For example, space in a school or Y may be had for free. McDonald's and Wendy's are often willing to donate food. For publicity, some banks in New York City have money for printing and paper. The New York State Off-Track Betting Office has a free printing service."

How do you make these connections to free or inexpensive supplies and services? Get on the telephone, and call banks, churches, schools, community merchants (for their product), young people who are working on the project and may have a parent or relative who is willing to do something.

The YAP planners found that the assistant coordinator's boyfriend was a cook who was able to get them several hundred pieces of chicken and cook it for the conference.

Some corporations have community relations branches which will contribute small amounts of money (usually less than $500) for activities which fit into their guidelines. Call the big corporations and ask for their community relations department. If they don't have one, tell the operator what you want and have him or her connect you to someone who can help you.

Now, for the list of things you'll have to do:

- Find space (make sure the space will be large enough for your target audience, with area and/or rooms for small groups as well as full group sessions). Do this as fast as possible, so you can start to advertise the conference.
- Get equipment. You'll need a sound system, chairs, tables, at the least. Make a list of what and how many of each you'll need. Don't wait until the last minute.
- Get supplies. You'll need paper, pencils, newsprint, markers, as well as paper goods for refreshments and lunch. Start your shopping list early on, so you don't end up in a tizzy shopping madly the day before the event.
- Arrange for food. Who will buy, shop for, cook, and serve the food? What will you have?
- Print up schedule with room assignments and make enough copies for all participants.
- Set up the space; make room assignments. How will you arrange the chairs and tables? Where will each workshop or panel meet? Where will lunch be served? How will the tables be set up for that? Who will do it?
- Arrange for music, singing. Print up song sheets, get a stereo, move a piano in.
- Make signs, posters, decorations.
- Set up registration. Have name tags, put together registration packets with whatever information you are handing out. Set up coffee and donuts.
- Organize a clean-up committee.

III. DEVELOP A FORMAT

How will you present all this information to your audience? What are the most effective ways to communicate about the topics you have chosen to focus on? How will you schedule the day's events?

A conference usually has some events which the whole audience attends, and others where people break up into small groups for workshops or discussions. It is advisable to have some free time for people to circulate, get to know one another, talk to your experts and resource people, pick up written information, or just have fun.

> *The Youth Action Program's format started with registration, coffee and doughnuts at 9:00 a.m. A half hour was set aside for this and then the conference opened officially with speeches by two of the youth planners. Workshops on birth control, abortion, teen parenting, VD, politics, and sterilization abuse followed, with participants choosing which to attend.*
>
> *Lunch was served, with dialogues about relationships in the afternoon. Again, these were small group discussions. The entire group gathered for a performance by a theater group that dramatized the issues of the day.*
>
> *The day closed with reports by the workshop and dialogue leaders who shared the highlights of their group's discussions so that participants could get information about the sessions which they had not chosen to attend.*
>
> *A questionnaire evaluating the conference was then filled out by all, and the conference ended at 5:00.*

Let's consider some of the requirements for format.

REGISTRATION. As people enter the conference, you will probably want them to sign in, get a name tag, and receive a schedule of the day's events. You may also want to give out additional information (such as a list of the agencies which provide health care services, articles on your topics, an evaluation questionnaire, a pad and pencil). Include these items in a folder or

THE EAST HARLEM YOUTH CONGRESS CONFERENCE ON SEX, PREGNANCY, AND RELATIONSHIPS

9:00 AM: Registration; coffee and donuts.

10:00 AM: Conference opens, chaired by Johnny Rivera
Keynote speech by Dorette Grant

11:00 AM: Workshops:

- Birth control...it's not only a pill.
- Facts you need to know about Abortion.
- Knowing what teen parenting is all about.
- S.T.D.'s: Sexually Transmitted Diseases.
- Politics, Sex and our Future.
- What you should know about Sterilization Abuse.

12:30 PM: Lunch

1:15 PM: Dialogues:

- Getting to know one another: Man to Man
- Getting to know one another: Woman to Woman
- Getting to know one another: Woman to Man
- Communicating with our Parents and Parents Communicating with Adolescents
- Getting the facts about Homosexuality
- Marriage

3:00 PM: Afternoon session chaired by Annie Putnam. Group performance by Family Life Theater & Youth Congress theater group.

4:00 PM: Creative reports from Workshops and Dialogues

5:00 PM: Conference closed.

manila envelope so your participants have an easy way to keep their papers together during the day and have something to take away with them to keep them interested in the issues.

Make people feel welcome. It's nice to have refreshments -- coffee, juice, donuts, fruit -- because it creates a warm atmosphere and helps people feel comfortable and start talking to one another while waiting for the formal conference events to begin.

> *The Youth Action Program planners greeted people at the door. Some of the planners circulated among the group welcoming them and asking them what their expectations of the day were. They made people feel involved and included right at the beginning.*
>
> *The YAP coordinators had not planned this. It happened spontaneously. But they reflected that this welcoming was very important and that they would plan for it next time.*

FULL CONFERENCE SESSIONS. The conference typically opens with a gathering of the entire audience. You can have brief statements by the planning coordinators who talk about what will happen at the conference, why it came about, what they hope participants will gain, as well as some presentation on the issues.

You may want a keynote speaker, perhaps someone from the planning or an expert in teenage sex education.

> *The Youth Action Program conference featured an 18-year old woman who had been involved in the planning and had very strong feelings about the need for young people to become informed about teenage sexuality.*

You may decide to have a full audience session if you have engaged a speaker whose topic is of concern to every participant, or who is particularly well-known or skilled. The problem with the single speaker/large audience setup is that it is harder for people to

participate actively and can become boring.

Theater or musical presentations can be an exciting and decidedly interesting way to address the entire group. The Youth Action Program scheduled a theater group for 3:00 in the afternoon, after all the workshops and dialogues, when people were more likely to be tired and in need of some stimulating entertainment. One of the performers described the theater group:

> *We're a group of teenagers who do improvisations on family problems -- pregnancy, drugs, alcoholism, racism. So many young people have come up to me after the show and said, "My father does the same thing," or "I have the same problem." We invent our own characters. People really get involved. The format is that we do the show, then have an audience question and answer period. First we have them talk to us as if we're still in character. We ask, "What do you think I should do in this situation?" They say, "You need help." We ask, "Where do we go for help?" They usually don't know, so then we talk about where to get help. Then we have them ask us questions directly, dropping the characters. We get a lot more people to get help that way than by just saying, "You should go to the clinic."*

PANELS. In a panel discussion you typically have four or five people sitting on the stage or at the front of the room, often at a table so they can take notes, to respond to ideas raised by the other speakers. These panel members usually represent different aspects of a topic. For example, in a discussion of abortion, you might have a doctor talking about the medical aspects of abortion, a social worker/counselor talking about choosing to have an abortion or some other option, a lawyer talking about the legal considerations and current laws governing abortions, and a health agency official talking about how young people can get counseling and services.

There is usually a panel moderator who times each of the speakers and holds them to a prearranged schedule; you might have each talk for 10 minutes, with a 10 minute question period following each

speaker. Or you can have all the speakers make their presentations, followed by a discussion among the panel about the points that have been made. Or you can open the discussion up to the audience for questions and comments.

You'll want to leave time at the end to summarize the main points of the day, and perhaps to make some further plans to pursue the issue.

It's also a good idea to leave some free time after the panel is over so that the audience can mingle with the panel informally.

WORKSHOPS. A workshop has a limited number of participants, with a session leader and perhaps an expert/resource person. The idea is to present information and stimulate discussion around the topic of the workshop, and to encourage active participation by all present. A list of questions about the topic is a good way to start, as the YAP planners did. You can put these questions up on newsprint or a blackboard, or pass out lists. Participants can then add any questions or concerns that are missing.

DIALOGUES. The YAP planners wanted to talk about relationships. They had dialogues called "Man to Man," "Woman to Woman," "Woman to Man." Parents and adolescents, homosexuality, and marriage were the other relationships discussed. Each session had a trained student discussion leader.

CIRCULATING AND FREE TIME. For information gathering. Conferences often have a room or area set up for displays, information, and demonstrations. Participants can wander through, collecting pamphlets, or other written information, listening to presentations or demonstrations (for example about birth control devices), or learning about youth-serving agencies and clinics. You might want to have a "marketplace" with representatives of health or sex education agencies where youth can actually find out what services are available and make appointments for help.

FOR REFRESHMENTS OR LUNCH. Good food, lively discussion, songs and music can get people involved and excited about the day's events. Set up your food and tables in a way that encourages conversation. Think about having some music or singing -- include

song sheets in your registration packet if you like.

IN BETWEEN EVENTS. Even though conference schedules tend to be hectic, because people get interested and everything runs a little late, try to leave time in between sessions so people can get to the bathroom, make telephone calls, get a drink of water, or just take a breather. But don't make the break too long or you'll lose your momentum.

SCHEDULING AND TIMING. As you've probably gathered by now, you need to develop an overall hour-by-hour schedule of the day. This is not an easy task, and to some extent you'll be guessing about the amount of time you need for each event, especially those which involve discussion among the audience. Sometimes an issue is hot, and people are clamoring to keep the discussion going and other times something you thought would last an hour may die out after 35 minutes.

Start out with the events that are easier to schedule. For example, speakers can be asked to talk for a certain amount of time, so that if you have two twenty minute speeches to open your conference, plus 10 minutes slack time, then you can figure 50 - 60 minutes for that part of your conference. Panel discussions are next: hold each speaker to a number of minutes, take questions for a certain amount of time, and leave time at the end for mingling. Workshops and dialogues are less predictable. You may have to set an arbitrary cutoff time. If the group is interested, arrange to meet again in the future; if the session is a flop, you might split up and go to other workshops.

Session leaders will need to time speakers, question and answer periods, and end their events as close to schedule as possible. You'll need watches and a trained leader who is responsible for the timing. Tell your audience what the time limits are.

➤ ADVERTISE THE CONFERENCE: GET PEOPLE TO COME

A practical task that requires a great deal of attention is the outreach to draw your audience. You may have to do an intensive campaign because people forget, need to be convinced, or need to know their friends are going too.

You need to have selected a date for the conference. Even before you secure space, you can send out "Hold the Date" cards, telling people there's a conference coming on such and such a date -- further details will be coming. Once you have your place, then you can start sending out fliers and doing more active publicity.

There are a lot of publicity methods you can use. Of all, personal contacts are the most effective, especially when you can connect with someone who has a lot of friends and will talk it up.

Here are some ideas:

- Fliers and posters. Make them eye-catching and compelling (see the YAP flier on page 69).
- Radio and T.V. spots.
- Press releases.
- Telephone campaigns.
- Letters.
- Personal visits.
- Presentations at schools, Y's, youth organizations, churches.

To find your audience, go where they are. In addition to schools and organizations, pass out leaflets in the street, at video game stores, wherever young people hang out.

A Strategy for Publicity: What to Do When

As we've said, you need to batten down certain details -- the date and the place -- before you do too much publicity. "Hold the Date" postcards can be your first advertising effort. Then you might start distributing your fliers and leaflets. As you get closer to the date of the conference, intensify your campaign. Do radio spots, and if you can afford it, keep increasing the frequency. Schedule a mailing for the week before. Do telephone campaigns a few days ahead of the conference. Have schools announce reminders over their

PA systems for the whole week before the conference. Finally, make personal visits and contacts, especially to those people you know are leaders and can bring groups of friends with them.

> *The Youth Action Program had fliers produced and distributed by the third week of their six week planning effort. They handed out about 3,000 fliers in all to get an audience of 250.*

➤ TRAIN WORKSHOP AND SESSION LEADERS

We are assuming that young people will lead the conference and the small group sessions. Some may have experience in this setting, but most will not. How will you train yourselves and your peers to make these sessions run smoothly, with active participation by all?

1. What is the role of session leaders? Session leaders introduce the subject of the session, have participants introduce themselves to one another, lay out the format and schedule ("first we'll have speakers, and then a question and answer period. Each speaker will talk for 10 minutes and then we'll have 20 minutes for group discussion.")

Session leaders also manage the group; they try to get everyone to participate and prevent anyone from monopolizing or disrupting the discussion. They summarize the main points and get the group to decide what next steps will be. They close the session.

2. Selecting session leaders. First you must choose leaders and alternates for each of the day's events. How will you select them? Accept all who volunteer? Have the group make nominations? Have the coordinators appoint them? That is up to you.

What are you looking for? Enthusiasm and interest? Experience leading groups? Knowledge about the topic? You can list whatever criteria you think will be necessary.

Keep in mind how much time you have in which to train session leaders. If you have ample time until the conference, you can prepare less experienced, less "natural" leaders to be good facilitators. If you

are very short on time, you'll probably want to go the safer route of identifying those people who are already skilled.

3. Training session leaders. The Youth Action Program established a training process. In three meetings, the leaders were asked what they thought might go wrong. They role-played difficult situations, and were asked to solve a variety of difficult problems.

They were given a format for each session:
Introductions
Speakers -- time limits
Questions, Discussion
Wrap Up and Resolution

And developed ground rules:
Can only speak once until everyone else has spoken;
Equal time for opposing views;
Time limits on speaking.

They learned techniques and strategies for handling problems:
What if everyone is too quiet?
Go around the room and ask each person for a comment on a particular issue or question
What if people are embarrassed and shy?
Be open yourself, and share your ideas and feelings with the group.

➤ THE DAY ARRIVES

After weeks of work, the day is here. You've had the energy going and you've got to keep that spirit up.

You'll have some last minute preparations -- maybe setting up the coffee, checking the equipment.

Expect some hitches. Something doesn't work, or someone doesn't show up. Stay calm, put your problem-solving abilities to work, and figure out a way around it.

On the day of the YAP conference, the planners went to the place of the conference at 8:00 a.m. in order to set up. But the person with the key overslept and had to be wakened. This cut preparation time to half an hour.

➤ EVALUATE THE CONFERENCE

To determine whether your conference accomplished the goals that you set, you need to set up some way to evaluate what happened. YAP designed a written questionnaire for all participants to fill out. Use as much information as you can to tell you how the conference went -- interview participants, each other, analyze it from your perspective. Then sit down as a group and ask:

What went well? Why?
what went wrong? Why?
What do we think we accomplished?
What would we do differently next time?
What did participants say?
What are people who didn't attend saying?

Then take some time to reflect on what you as individuals have learned during the planning process -- skills, knowledge, how to work and cooperate with others.

➤ FOLLOW-UP: KEEP THE LEARNING COMING

A one-day conference on sex education is not going to provide a teenager with all the information and services he or she needs. All it can do is to get the process started, so a young person will know where to go for help, and how to get more information.

But you can design mechanisms that ensure that people stay involved with the issues, and connect with the agencies and resources they need. Some ideas:

- Cngoing discussion groups -- on relationships, birth control, or any of the topics discussed at the conference;
- Newsletters and posters. YAP produced a poster with myths and facts about sex and relationships, resources on sex education, and different peoples' reactions to the conference;
- A fact sheet on each of the topics you discussed;
- A bibliography for further reading;
- A listing of the resources and agencies serving youth on these issues. Check with each of these agencies to

make sure they are listed accurately, and that they know they are being advertised;

- A more permanent clearinghouse for information on adolescent sexuality. You'll probably need funding and support for this.

IV. CREATE A GOOD SPIRIT

Getting your audience to listen to what you're saying is more than a matter of throwing information and numbers at them and expecting them to absorb and use them. As the 18-year old keynote speaker from the Youth Action Program points out, "You have to put it in a form that is compelling. You can't just spout off statistics."

Richard, the coordinator of the YAP conference, reports that YAP thought about ways to personalize the conference from the beginning. YAP's flier for the conference asked:

> *Do you have questions about sex? Birth control? Or a relationship you are in? You're in LUCK! The East Harlem Youth Congress is having this Conference on Sex, Pregnancy and Relationships to answer your questions and discuss the ones to which nobody knows the answer.*

The direct approach -- straight talking about teenagers' concerns -- is a good way to reach your audience of young people. Equally important is that you create a spirit, get the energy going, and make the conference a vital and rousing event.

> *The YAP planners plus some young people who had decided to come to the conference gathered the night before to set up. They made posters, and practiced songs and speeches. "We stayed until 11:30 and got a good feeling going. There were new people who hadn't been involved before. We felt a real sense of unity and were psyched for the next day."*

At the conference, the keynote speaker first had everyone join together in singing "The Greatest Love of All" using the song sheets they had received in their registration packets. "We hugged each other during the song. We hadn't planned that -- I don't think you could plan it." During lunch they did more singing.

SUMMARY
WHAT MAKES A SUCCESSFUL CONFERENCE, RUN BY AND FOR YOUTH?

- *The recognition that each of us is capable of doing a lot more than we're currently doing.*
- *The recognition that each of us is good, and has skills.*
- *Getting people to recognize that each has skills and is good at some things. Get people involved, provide support and information so they can then take action.*
- *The ability to listen very carefully.*
- *An attitude of deep caring among us and for our community. A feeling of wanting to see a difference in our lives.*
- *Building on the good and positive. I found in interviewing people after the conference about the issues that came up that people want to be good and do the right thing but may have given up, or don't have the support to do it.*
- *We encourage people to do a lot of thinking. This is really a place to open up doors, to get people to start thinking about themselves and their community.*
- *The idea that we are all leaders, and with the right help and support, we can all be articulate and informed.*

PART TWO

CASE STUDIES OF YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN HEALTH PROJECTS

PREFACE TO PART II

The following case studies of Youth Participation in Health projects are drawn from the Clearinghouse of the National Commission on Resources for Youth. Through the Clearinghouse, NCRY identifies outstanding Youth Participation projects and documents their work. Most projects are visited by a trained observer before information is entered into the Clearinghouse files. When a visit is not possible, NCRY uses another form of external validation, such as an evaluation report.

The projects described represent only a small proportion of the many Youth Participation in Health projects NCRY has documented. They were chosen because of their good quality and because many of their practices are adaptable to other settings. Fuller information about these projects as well as other Youth Participation efforts is available by writing NCRY.

The following persons prepared these case studies:

- Nancy Ferantella: Unitas
- Steve Arbuss: Teenage Advocate Program
- Nancy Beer: Divorced Kids' Groups
- Ellen Lippmann: All other projects. Ms. Lippmann also supervised the Clearinghouse during the collection of most of the information about Youth Participation in Health.

Name of Project: Youth-Conducted Survey of Alcohol and Alternatives Project

Address: Sheriff's Office of Cook County
Youth Services Department
1401 South Maybrook Drive
Maywood, IL 60153

Telephone: (312)865-2900

Administering Agency: Sheriff's Office of Cook County

Funding Sources: Illinois Department of Mental Health & Developmental Disabilities/Illinois Alcoholism Prevention Initiative

Annual Budget: $14,744.84

Number of Staff: 2

Number of Youth Participants: 15-17

Contact Person: Karen Popowski, Project Administrator

Abstract

Fifteen paid high school age youth surveyed junior high school students in their community to determine their level of alcohol use and to gather creative ideas for the use of free time. The youth used the data to develop a collection of alcohol-free activities, which they printed on decks of cards and distributed. The data, in computer printout form, was also provided to the project's funder for use in creating future prevention efforts. The youth staff members were trained by project staff and others from the Cook County Sheriff's Youth Services Department, as well as by outside consultants. The Youth-Conducted Survey was one of thirty projects funded by the Illinois Alcoholism Prevention Initiative. It was designed to prevent alcoholism in youth and to provide a positive employment opportunity to the youth staff. It also helped to break down racial barriers between the youth staff members.

Background

In 1979, Howard Harrington, Coordinator of Community Education and Training for the Sheriff's Office Youth Services Department, attended a Summer Seminar on Youthwork at the University of Minnesota. Each participant was required to design an action plan for a project to be

implemented upon the participant's return home. Harrington designed a youth leadership project, based on the concept of Youth Participation.

While searching for funds with which to implement his project, Harrington learned about the Illinois Alcoholism Prevention Initiative, and modified his plan to include alcoholism prevention as a major goal. He and Karen Popowski, the Project Administrator, wrote a proposal and were granted funds from the Initiative. They recruited a group of high school students and training began in February, 1980.

A project summary describes the reasoning behind the project's design:

> This undertaking sought to generate data on alcohol abuse and alcoholism from various generational, geographical, occupational, and socio-economic populations throughout the State. This particular Project's target population was 7th and 8th grade students. This age group was chosen because little specific information about the population existed and because of the common sentiment that this is the age group at which alcoholism prevention programs should be primarily focused. The site of the Project was a suburban township in metropolitan Chicago. This area was targeted for several reasons including: no existing central township-wide youth service (only village services); no other single youth committee had resources to allocate to such a study; several local youth committees agreed to work cooperatively on the Project; the economic and racial diversity of the communities within the township.
>
> The Project was designed as a youth employment program and implemented by a youth participation model. Such a model holds that youth, when equipped with the necessary information and skills, and when intimately involved in the entire process of a project, i.e., needs assessment, program design, implementation, and evaluation, can be valuable and viable resources to other youth and the community at large as well.

Project Goals and Objectives

The Youth-Conducted Survey was planned with several goals in mind. First, the project sought to obtain information about patterns and attitudes about alcohol use among junior high students that could be useful for future prevention programs. Second, it aimed to prevent alcohol abuse by young people in Provision Township by providing them with creative ideas for alternative activities. Third, project staff hoped the project would prove to be a valuable employment experience for its youth staff members, who had few other employment opportunities. Fourth, the staff anticipated that community members would change some of their negative attitudes about youth when they saw the contribution the young interviewers would make to that community.

In addition, Harrington mentions that the project was designed to include a representative ethnic and racial mix of youth in the Township, with an underlying goal of breaking down racial barriers between the youth. This philosophy pervades all programs of the Sheriff's Youth Services Department, he says.

Project Description

The fifteen high school age youth* who served as youth staff for the Youth-Conducted Survey progressed through three major stages of the project: training, data gathering, and packaging and distributing "natural high" ideas.

Training. The youth were trained initially for approximately a month, working after school three days a week, two to three hours a day. They were paid minimum wage from project funds. (At regular intervals, the young people received pay raises. Those who did additional work also received bonuses.) Sessions conducted by project staff and others from the Youth Services Department, as well as by outside consultants, focused on communications, problem-solving, decision-making, assertiveness training, and survey design and strategy. The young people had a hand in designing their own training, by responding in brain-storming sessions to such questions as: "These are the tasks that will be involved in carrying out the project. What do you think you will need to know to accomplish them?"

Training continued throughout the project's duration as specific skills were needed. When the youth began to do face-to-face interviews with junior high students, for example, they received training in interview techniques.

When the initial training phase was completed, the youth participated in three concluding events. One was an "urban experience," much like a scavenger hunt, in which the young people tested their new skills. They divided into three smaller groups. Each youth could take $1.25 and each group was given $ .20 for phone calls. They were then driven to a local neighborhood where they were to find the answers to questions about the neighborhood's history or facilities. They were also to find someplace other than a fast food restaurant to eat lunch for their $1.25 and were to ask a stranger to join them for lunch.

The young people also performed a role-play of a school board meeting, to prepare them in case they had to meet with school boards to get permission to do in-school interviews.

Finally, the youth planned and conducted a "commencement ceremony," which staff say was "one of the highlights of the project." At this ceremony, the young people spoke to adults (many of whom were their parents) about the project, again demonstrating their new skill in communication.

*Seventeen youth began the project, but two dropped out after the training stage.

Data Gathering. The young people used surveys and face-to-face interviews to gather information from seventh and eighth grade students about their use of alcohol and other drugs and about creative ideas for reaching a "natural high." Initially, project staff had planned only face-to-face interviews, but they came to realize that this would be too unwieldy a process for reaching several hundred students. They designed a survey form based on those developed by the Research Triangle Institute (for the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism and the National Institute on Drug Abuse) and the New York State Division of Substance Abuse Services. The youth contributed to the survey design by defining content and by adapating the form's language for junior high students.

Staff members also secured the cooperation of three school districts which allowed the youth staff members to conduct their surveys within the schools. The young people ultimately administered 580 surveys, asking the seventh and eighth graders such questions as: "Can you talk freely to your father (or mother or siblings) about your personal feelings?", 'How much of your free time do you spend with the kids you hang around with?", and 'How old were you when you had your first drink?" These surveys were hand coded by the young staff members; each survey required the coding of two computer input sheets.* In this stage and the face-to-face interviews, the young people had the option of working longer hours for additional pay. They usually worked three hours a day, three days a week during the school year and forty hours a week during part of the summer.

The young interviewers next developed several interview outlines to assist them in face-to-face interviews with seventh and eighth graders, and practiced interviewing friends and family members. They also brainstormed a list of the best places to find and interview the younger students. These included parks, bowling alleys, the street, church groups, libraries, fast food restaurants and shopping centers. The interviewers, usually working in pairs or teams, conducted approximately 150 interviews, focusing on the students' use of free time and their creative ideas for possible "natural high" activities.

Packaging and Distribution of "Natural High" Ideas. The youth and adult staff members in the project originally thought they would compile the 'natural high," alternative-to-drinking ideas in a booklet to be distributed to youth in schools and community organizations. They decided that a booklet was too easily discarded after a quick one-time reading, and they began a search for a more attractive, reusable format for their ideas. They developed a list of possibilities and then took a trip to a shopping center to explore creative packaging. The project summary

*Information on the survey forms was confidential.

describes their final design :

> The final "natural high" idea package model came to be called "Straight Up". The name changed several times before it took its final form. This was due to both youth and adult staff dissatisfaction with earlier choices. This combination of soft sculpture/deck of alternative "natural high" idea cards incorporates an industrial glove and sleeve sewn together and stuffed, holding the deck of cards which contains fun ideas for field trips, parties, group games, and volunteer experiences, etc.

A graphic artist, hired by the project, worked with the youth on producing these sculpture/cards. The youth worked on four rented sewing machines to put together 500 gloves and sleeves; the project coordinator and some young people provided quality control, he says. The youth also compiled and edited the material from their interviews, preparing it to be typset for the deck of idea cards. Fifteen hundred decks of cards were initially printed, since staff felt there would be people who would like the cards without the soft sculpture.

Finally, the young interviewers decided on a priority order for distribution of their project. They thought it should go first to schools and communities that had cooperated with the project, such as the three school districts that allowed them to conduct surveys in classrooms. Second, they wanted to make limited numbers of "Straight Up" available to the schools that had not wanted to participate, to show them what youth could do when given the opportunity. Last, they decided that some models should be sent to helpful adults who might be able to speak about the project or even replicate it.

The project concluded with three events. The first was a small ceremony during which the youth presented each other with wooden plaques of appreciation. The second, a picnic and barbecue, was attended by the youth and other Youth Services Department staff. In the third, a resume writing workshop, adult staff assisted the youth in incorporating into a resume the skills they had gained during the project. Staff hoped that having the skills and having them reflected in a resume would help the youth attain future employment.

Administrative Structure and Staff Roles

The Youth-Conducted Survey was sponsored by the Illinois Alcoholism Prevention Initiative of the Illinois Department of Mental Health and Development Disabilities. This Initiative supported thirty projects that explored the extent and affects of alcoholism in various age or special needs groups; the Youth-Conducted Survey's focus was seventh and eighth graders. The Initiative's director later won an award from the National Association of Prevention Professionals.

The Youth Services Department is one of several departments of the Cook County Sheriff's Office. While some of that office's functions are mandated by law, the sheriff set up the Youth Services Department voluntarily, since youth services are a personal concern of his. Howard Harrington, the coordinator of the Youth-Conducted Survey, was the coordinator of Community Education and Training for the Youth Services Department. Karen Popowski, the project administrator, handled all financial matters for the project. She was then the assistant director for the Department and is now its director. Harrington mentions that he was helped at every stage of the project by other staff members in the Department, and suggests that a project like this needs the involvement of more than one adult staff person.

Recruitment and Youth Profile

Staff members initially advertised the project by sending a press release to suburban newspapers, high school and college papers, youth serving coalitions, a human services coordinating council and radio stations. They also distributed job descriptions and employment applications to students who expressed interest after seeing the press release. In addition, school personnel, a human relations commission, local youth commission and the Juvenile Division of the Probation Section of the Circuit Court of Cook County helped to recruit project participants.

Participants were required to read, write and communicate well enough to participate. They needed to be between the ages of 16 and 18, to live in the township (Proviso), and to be able to provide their own transportation. Also, seven youth and two adults who attended a community meeting developed a list of "Desirable Qualities of Project Employed Youth," which included: streetwise, creative, tactful, responsible and easy to talk to.

As mentioned, seventeen youth were hired, but two left after the training phase, for personal reasons. Of the fifteen who completed the project, two were not in school. Approximately one third had had police contact. The group represented a mix of racial and economic backgrounds, as well as a balance of male and female members and of those youth considered "good" and "bad."

This mix was deliberate: it reflected the community at large and it was hoped the project would help to break down barriers between youth from different racial or economic backgrounds.

Outcomes to Date

The most visible outcomes of the Youth-Conducted Survey are the soft sculpture/decks of cards produced and in use by those seeking "natural high" ideas for use of free time. Initially, 500 sculptures and 1500 decks of cards were produced. Later, another small grant was obtained to produce even more cards, in order to meet the demand.

The young people also gathered data for the Illinois Alcoholism Prevention Initiative on "patterns of alcohol use and related activities amoung junior high school students," from nearly 600 seventh and eighth graders. They provided the data in computer printout form. It will be used as the basis for future prevention efforts.

The Youth Services Department evaluated the impact of project participation on the young interviewers. The "Tennessee Self Concept Scale" was administered to them at the beginning of the project and again at the end. Although the results did demonstrate some movement toward improved self-concept among the participants, it was relatively insignificant. One interpretation was that this test was not an appropriate instrument to measure change in the young interviewers. As the test interpreter expained:

> An important consideration in examining these test results is that the project focus was on completing the assigned task rather than on personal growth or self-betterment. An improvement of staff members' (youth) self-concept was of secondary benefit, rather than the main goal of the project.

Project staff conducted two video-taped evaluation sessions, one for the participants and one for their parents. Their comments are summed up by project staff:

> During their sessions, the teens commented that: "I feel like now I can better express how I feel to adults (teachers and parents); I don't feel like I need to be ripped off." Another participant remarked: "I act older now, more grown up." Other young adults said that they now found it easier to approach strangers and to communicate with them and friends. Having been involved in the Project provided another worker with a "sense of purpose, something to look forward to." Parents' comments seemed to parallel those of their children. In general, they indicated that they had seen change. This was most often demonstrated in their children's acting older and being more responsible then they had been before. One mother also was quite amazed to learn that her son could now sew.

The project stages were also photographed in a series of slides. These provide a history of the project and, according to project staff, "an occasion for looking back and reflecting upon it." The young people also reflected on their work when they were interviewed by a reporter from a local newspaper. Their responses often showed that important lessons had been learned; one young man stated, 'What I learned most is that Black folks and white folks can work together."

The young people also made some evaluative comments about the project, and suggested possible improvements. At least one youth participant served as a consultant to an outside group that was planning a similar project. The Youth Services Department also developed another project, based in part on the experiences of the Youth-Conducted Survey. Some of the same youth are taking part in the new project, entitled the Substance, Peer, and Community Education Project (SPACE), which is "directed towards expanding the capacity of the community to reduce substance abuse among young people."

Finally, as mentioned, a resume-writing workshop held at the end of the project helped the young people to "pin down" their job skills.

Problems and Progress

Time posed a major problem for the project, in several ways. First, there was not enough time to do all that project staff hoped to accomplish. It took more time than anticipated to establish and maintain contacts with community agencies and schools, particularly because the Youth Services Department serves an entire county, rather than just one community. Training the youth participants could have taken six months, the project staff realize, if they were to have been equipped with all the skills and information necessary to undertake the project. The project coordinator thinks the young people felt that the initial training took too long. This was especially true because it was followed by the designing of the survey, another "boring" task. He thinks it would be better to focus on an immediate activity at first, since many of the youth appeared to be losing interest during the first stage of the project.

Several administrative problems existed, as well. Howard Harrington, the project coordinator, thinks that it was difficult for a large traditional agency such as the Sheriff's Office to adjust to relating to youth employees. He says that many aspects of record keeping, identification and payroll presented constant problems. With every pay period, for instance, he was called in to straighten out the pay situation for at least one youth employee.

In addition, the youth themselves were unused to taking on responsibility, and often asked the coordinator to step in and become more authoritarian. He refused, however, and after training and more experience, the youth learned to enjoy their responsibility.

The racial mix of youth sometimes presented problems, Harrington says. When the youth were coding surveys or sewing their soft sculptures, they listened to music. Argument occasionally broke out about whether to listen to "Black" music or "white" music, and were sometimes stopped only when the radio was turned off completely. Harrington also notes that the youth separated themselves along racial lines when the project began, but their divisions broke down according to interests and work preferences.

Finally, Harrington mentions that doing a survey is a "headache," but adds that "that's the nature of the thing," not a problem specific to the Youth-Conducted Survey.

Implementation Hints

Harrington and other staff members have several suggestions for anyone wishing to replicate the Youth-Conducted Survey. First, they recommend that "persons running such projects be familiar with the social psychology of groups and group dynamics." This is especially helpful when the group passes through its inevitable "peaks" and "valleys," each of which require different skills on the part of adult staff.

Second, Harrington advises tying training to related activities, rather than having a separate "training period." He thinks training makes the most sense when it is followed immediately by the activity it prepares youth for.

The ceremonies included in the project are helpful, too, in providing the youth with opportunities to integrate their skills and in bringing them together as a united group. The commencement ceremony following the training stage and the concluding ceremony at which plaques were presented were both highlights for the youth.

Also, says Harrington, since the project worked to bring youth of different racial and ethnic backgrounds together, it migh be useful as a model for communities in which race relations are a problem.

And finally, Harrington adds, even within limitations of community need or funding restrictions, there are always ways of involving youth. With a little creativity, he says, "you can find room for youth to make real decisions."

General Comments

The Youth-Conducted Survey served a number of purposes. It collected important data about alcohol use among junior high students and provided them and others with a clear presentation of many alternative, "natural high" ideas. It provided a positive employment experience for fifteen young people, and reinforced that experience by adding their new skills to their resumes. It helped to break down racial barriers between its young employees by engaging them in cooperative tasks. But the underlying benefit of the project is best summed up by Karen Popowski, the project

administrator, in a letter to the project's funder:

> While I believe the enclosed reports represent the required and necessary information regarding our Alcoholism Prevention Initiative demonstration, what is not written is the real spirit of the project. The dynamics involved in seeing young people willing and able to produce a creative product, and participate in a meaningful role among their peers cannot be adequately captured.

Name of Project: CASPAR Alcohol Education Program

Address: 226 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02143
(617) 623-2080

Administering Agency: Cambridge Hospital

Funding Sources: National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA), state, local, fees for training, literature sales.

Budget: $100,000/year

Staff: 2 paid supervisors/trainers
1 paid administrative assistant
several college volunteers (former peer leaders)

Youth Participants: 35 peer leaders

Contact: Lena DiCicco, Program Director
Dixie Mills, Supervisor

Abstract

A group of high school students are trained as "peer leaders," providing alcohol education to students in the Somerville community. The peer leaders, who are paid for their efforts, represent a variety of academic levels, interests, and drinking experience. The students lead discussion groups, conduct sessions of driver education classes, assist classroom teachers in conducting alcohol education units, and do informal counseling.

Background

CASPAR (Cambridge-Somerville Program for Alcoholism Rehabilitation) resulted from four years of planning and preparing for an alcohol education teacher-training program. Grant proposals for the program included a youth component--"We felt like we needed to have youth involved, and wanted to pay them for working for us," says staff member Dixie Mills. CASPAR received its first NIAAA grant in early 1975, and has since been chosen as a national NIAAA model for preventive alcohol abuse programs.

The program is located in Somerville, a blue-collar, ethnically Irish and Italian city near Boston. It seeks to expose young people, starting in early elementary grades, to "repeated, consistent, and unemotional messages about drinking through student-centered classroom activities, structured peer influence, and a positive community atmosphere," in hopes that they will make

responsible decisions about alcohol use.

Project Goals and Objectives

CASPAR is considered an "action/research" project, focusing on the abuse of alcohol by youth. As a result of its alcohol education efforts, CASPAR hopes that "abstainers emerge with an even better rationale for abstaining; and that users of alcohol, with a clearer understanding of why they are drinking and when they choose to drink, will drink sensibly without harm to themselves or others."

Project Description

New peer leaders, chosen in groups of 12, receive 30 to 40 hours of training, which consists of information about alcohol, exploration of personal feelings, and discussion of drinking experiences. After training, which takes up to 15 weeks, the students begin to assume the responsibilities of peer leaders.

Peer leaders take part in a number of activities designed to help other young people make decisions about drinking, many of which were initiated and designed by the students themselves. They co-lead workshops about alcohol, after school from 3 to 5 p.m. Some peer leaders attend conferences to speak about teenage drinking. They help train outside groups (including Somerville police cadets, probation officers, and social workers) by leading small group discussions and through role plays. Peer leaders visit classrooms on request (for teachers who are conducting alcohol education units) and assist teachers by leading groups. In elementary classrooms, peer leaders present puppet shows and games about decision-making and alcohol.

Peer leaders get involved in many other activities, such as reviewing and critiquing new alcohol education materials, doing office work, planning new activities, and developing program materials (such as a comic book about responsible decision-making). In the summer, CASPAR youth train summer youth employment counselors, conduct workshops at camps, and help out in a local detoxification treatment center.

Many of CASPAR's peer-leader actvities were developed by the young people either as innovations or as a response to requests for services. One young woman, for example, was in the car with her Driver Education instructor, and mentioned her work with CASPAR. The teacher asked if the CASPAR group could make a presentation about alcohol abuse for his driving classes, and the matter was brought up in a peer leader meeting. The youth planned the presentation with the teacher, and peer lessons in Driver Education classes are now "institutionalized."

The peer leaders have the opportunity to discuss and plan such activities in weekly meetings (of the group of 12 that originally trained together) with CASPAR supervisors. In these meetings, youth set goals for the future, develop the curriculum for after school workshops, and, "with a little bit of guidance" from their

supervisors, plan new projects. At these meetings, the young people also continue the discussions about experiences with and personal feelings about drinking that began during training. In addition, they look at the week's activities, and how successful they were. The peer leaders thus have a chance not only to discuss requests for service and evaluate new ideas, but also explore personal feelings, and reflect upon the work they have been doing.

Administrative Structure and Staff Roles

CASPAR is a unit of the Cambridge-Somerville Mental Health and Retardation Center, and is part of the Alcoholism Program of the Departments of Medicine and Psychiatry of Cambridge Hospital (Harvard Medical School). The staff consists of paid supervisors who train the peer leaders and offer continual guidance and support. Several college students, who were formerly peer leaders, volunteer as staff members.

Recruitment; Youth Profile

The original peer leaders for CASPAR were recruited by referral and through high school daily bulletin announcements. In later years, however, the program became quite well known among students, and advertisements were no longer necessary. Currently, peer leaders are involved in screening and recommending new participants.

The peer leaders range from 15 to 18 years old, male and female. Most come from working class families. They are at many levels of academic achievement (most are not considered "honor roll types" or "typical" student leaders), have a variety of interests, and differing experiences with drinking and alcoholism.

Outcomes to Date

The peer leaders have had a significant impact on the 3000 students in the Somerville school district that have been exposed to the CASPAR program. Just as importantly, the experience of working as peer leaders has benefited the CASPAR youth. Staff members feel that the young people involved feel more worthwhile and have a better sense of their life goals.

In the Somerville community, where one-third of the students drop out of school, these youth are breaking the mold for "kids who are lost in the middle." As a result of the personal rewards for their work, the attainment of concrete skills, and the development of self-esteem, students who before had few, if any, future goals are now planning for careers as social workers, nurses and probation officers. Some of the peer leaders who were not expected to finish junior high school are now in college. Others have been the first in their families to graduate high school.

Problems/Progress

The CASPAR staff notes that funding the project had been a problem. However, federal grants, training contracts and income from the sale of CASPAR literature has eased that situation considerably. For similar projects, it has been suggested that local school systems, PTA, and other local groups could provide funds and other support. Another alternative is to offer course credit rather than pay as an incentive for students.

Implementation hints

The CASPAR program has shown to be replicable, in three sites, indicating that the program's success is not dependent on Somerville or the CASPAR staff. There are a number of factors, however, which the CASPAR staff believes to be necessary for effective implementation of such a program.

According to Dixie Mills, the training and support of the youth are critical. "A lot of programs are excited by the idea," she says, "and want to do it, but are just not willing to train and supervise" the young people. The weekly group meetings and the availability of adult staff for support and, to some extent, monitoring (a student who is doing poorly in school will be approached by an adult supervisor) help the program work.

The staff insures that everybody involved with CASPAR understands and accepts the program's goals. The program is oriented in a specific direction, offering just alcohol education. Other by-products, such as changing the school or increasing community awareness, are welcomed, but are not specifically part of the program's objectives.

Finally, the youth are considered "peer leaders," not "peer counselors." The young people have some opportunity for informal counseling, but the school administration and guidance personnel are not comfortable with the idea of youth "counselors." A "leadership" role for students is thus preferable. The students are also in a less demanding position, fulfulling the role of leaders rather than having a potentially overwhelming responsibility as counselors.

General Comments

In CASPAR, young people are involved in a model alcohol education program that has attracted considerable attention and has been shown to be replicable. Their role in the program is a significant one: the students lead workshops, help train groups of adults, develop materials, and act as a resource for teachers who instruct alcohol education units. The peer leaders have an opportunity to plan, discuss their work, and view CASPAR activities from their personal perspectives on drinking and alcohol abuse. Thus, the Somerville community has set up a prevention program using an excellent resource for reaching young people--other youth.

Name of Project: Teen Peer Education Project

Address: 830 University Avenue
Berkeley, California 94710

Telephone: (415) 845-6550

Administering Agency: Berkeley City Health Department
Comprehensive Family Planning Clinic

Funding Sources: for staff and training materials: HEW, Title 10, family planning money
for student salaries: YEP - Youth Entitlement Program, Department of Labor; YES - Youth Employment Summer Program, CETA

Annual Budget: currently $92,000

Number of Staff: 3

Number of Youth Participants: 20, FY 1979-1980

Project Director: Laura Anderson

Contact Person: Ida Castillo

Abstract:

In the Teen Peer Education Project, developed within the Berkeley City Health Department Comprehensive Family Planning Clinic, high school students provide health care information and self-help skills to community youth in a variety of settings. They are trained in factual information, crisis identification, and outreach techniques, and take these skills to hospitals, clinics, youth centers, and playgrounds, where they meet with groups of their peers for informal education sessions.

Background:

In 1979, the Berkeley Public Schools received a Youth Entitlement Program grant from the Department of Labor, as one of ten demonstration projects across the country. With this grant, and with additional funds from the CETA Youth Employment Summer Program, they developed a program to encourage students to remain in school by offering them paid employment. Students in the 14 to 15 year old age bracket were paid by the YES program, while 16 to 18 year olds were paid by YEP.

The Berkeley City Health Department Comprehensive Family Planning Clinic was one of many placements offered to the students in this work program. Staff at the Clinic were reluctant to offer the students only menial jobs, and began to explore the possibility of training them in health care informational and outreach skills, with an eye toward

sending them into the adolescent community as peer educators. Ultimately, the Teen Peer Education Project became a subsidiary placement service in itself. Students who complete a training phase of the program are placed in hospitals, youth groups, playgrounds, and even in the Family Planning Clinic, as health care educators. The project has now grown to include youth-planned conferences and training run by young "graduates."

Project Goals and Objectives:

Laura Anderson, director of the project, spells out the major goal of the Teen Peer Education Project as follows: "To acknowledge and utilize the abilities of adolescents to influence adolescent behavior and decision-making, through training around information in social and personal living." Objectives within this framework include training and curriculum development, placement, and advocacy for youth competence within the adult community.

Project Description:

20 high school students, ages 14 - 18, participate in two phases of the Teen Peer Education Project. Both phases involve a 20 hour/week commitment during the school year, and 40 hours/week during the summer. Phase 1 involves training in factual information, from basic anatomy to the specifics of birth control and abortion. Training in outreach skills and counseling is also provided, with an emphasis on self-help. Students are trained to recognize signs of drug abuse, suicidal intent, or other potential crises, and to make referrals to appropriate agencies.

Phase 2 involves placing the young people in settings that will allow them to utilize their skills in organizing groups or individuals for education and counseling sessions. A student placed at Childrens' Hospital leads an on-going discussion group on dating, sex, and other social issues. At the Berkeley Youth Alternatives Center, a project member has set up family planning "raps," and several project members regularly visit school classes in Social and Family Planning, as discussion leaders. Students have also been placed with the city Recreation Department, where they hold informal discussions at local playgrounds; at a nearby Asian youth group; and at the Family Planning Clinic.

In addition to these regular activities, the students have recently developed two conferences. The first was a workshop for other students which offered sessions with informative speakers from the health care field. The workshop was planned entirely by the young people, and they feel its success was demonstrated when 250 youth showed up, "on a Saturday!" The second conference pooled the Teen Peer Education Project with four other peer education programs in the area, to explore common concerns and future cooperative programs for the community. This conference, also held on a Saturday, drew 75 young people from the five projects.

Students in the project have many opportunities to evaluate the project, their placements, and their own growth. During the initial training phase, each student keeps a journal of day-to-day events, feelings, successes, and failures. Specific learning needs often get pinpointed here. At the end of the training period, the students do an overall evaluation of that phase. After placement, they meet once a week as a group, with their trainers. Comments and complaints about the placements are aired, and the students get the chance to keep in touch with the other young people in the program. In addition, each student is involved in one-to-one counseling with a staff member throughout the program.

The Teen Peer Education Project continues to expand. As the project moves into its second year, "graduates" of the project will return as trainers for the new group of student educators.

In addition, the possibility of a youth network in the Berkeley area, devoted to youth advocacy in the political and other arenas, has grown out of the conference of peer education projects. The need for such a network arose when young people became concerned that propositions voted upon in a recent election threatened to abolish funding for a number of youth programs. Having traveled to Sacramento to talk with legislators about the need for youth and family planning programs, the students recognized a viable place for youth advocacy within the political system and the community in general.

Administrative Structure and Staff Roles:

Staff for the Teen Peer Education Project were recruited from the Family Planning Clinic. Laura Anderson, director of the Clinic, serves as supervisor for two staff members, known as trainers. Although both trainers perform many of the same duties, some separate functions have developed. One staff member is responsible for curriculum planning and training; that is, for Phase 1. The other staff member serves as community liaison, searching out placements and trying to persuade reluctant community members to offer their agencies as placements. Her responsibilities also include follow-up of students and placements. Essentially, she coordinates Phase 2 of the project. Both trainers are involved in teaching, counseling, and advising the students throughout the entire project, and both share recruitment with the director.

Recruitment / Youth Profile:

Recruitment for the project takes place in one of two ways. Most students are recruited by the liaison for the Youth Entitlement Program and the Youth Employment Summer Program in the Berkeley Public Schools. When they apply for the funded employment program, the Teen Peer Education Project is offered as one of many placement possiblities. Students who choose the project are then screened for leadership qualities and/or previous group work, although those without

such experience are not necessarily excluded. Project staff also try to determine the students' level of comfort with health care issues, particularly those involving sexuality. Occasionally, staff or students know of someone they feel might benefit from participation in the project, and they refer the student to the funded employment program.

Students in the Teen Peer Education Project range in age from 14 to 18, though it is the older students who tend to complete the entire year's program. All are low-income, since this is a prerequisite for inclusion in the Youth Entitlement Program and Youth Employment Summer Program. They come from Black, white, Hispanic, Asian, and other ethnic backgrounds, and are both male and female. They must maintain a "C" average in school in order to remain eligible for funding.

Outcomes to Date:

Some follow-up has been done with the young people who have completed the program, and in some cases completed high school, and most of their comments on the project are positive. 95% of those questioned have said that the project "really helped them in their lives." They improved in their ability to make choices, and in their personal health care, as well.

Growth in confidence is strongly evident. As Anderson says, "We see extremely shy young people, hardly able to open their mouths, who after training come out with the strongest opinions!"

An unexpected result of the project has been in the career area. Many students in the program find that the health care field has been opened up for them; that health care doesn't mean "just doctors and nurses." Many go on to study health care in college; one student is now working at a junior college clinic. They find that their experience in the Teen Peer Education Project provides them with a "built-in resume." (Trainers have provided some help with the actual writing of resumes.)

The effect of the project on the youth community in Berkeley has not yet been measured, but the large numbers of young people who have shown up for education sessions and conferences indicates that the project is answering a community need.

Project members' attitudes toward their peers is changing, too. One young woman was heard rebuking a friend who had derided a young man for being homosexual: "And what's wrong with that?! That's his lifestyle!"

Finally, the students' desire to form a youth advocacy network, and to return as trainers for future participants, shows a new recognition of their own strength and competence.

Problems / Progress:

Laura Anderson, Clinic director, considers community reluctance to include peer educators the project's major problem. Staff and students must expend a great deal of energy "selling the competency" of the young people to the management of prospective placements. Most of the reluctance seems to stem from an adult opinion that youth are usually irresponsible. Staff have managed to find not only several people willing to offer placements, but a small core of individuals and agencies willing to support youth activities in the community in general. This has provided encouragement needed to keep plugging away.

Ida Castillo, one of the two staff trainers, has found the question of the project's status within the funded employment program to be a mixed blessing, as well. The Youth Entitlement Program has been asked to suggest projects that the Department of Labor might audit, and has several times suggested the Teen Peer Education Project because of its comprehensive training and its positive effect on the youth involved. According to Castillo, Department of Labor auditors have been equally enthusiastic about the program and its results, but have also raised the question of paying the students for the time they spend in training. Castillo has thus far been able to convince them that the training has long-term career benefits, and is worth the cost, but the need for this explanation has caused some strain on staff. Questions of this nature may become more serious when Department of Labor funds are reduced in September 1980.

Implementation Hints:

The Teen Peer Education Project involves several components necessary for its duplication. The first is the high quality of education provided to the students involved, which insures that high quality information is passed along to the youth community. Secondly, dedication in seeking supportive placements is crucial, particularly in the face of the community reluctance mentioned above. Staff commitment is vital, and helps infuse the students with enthusiasm.

The funds provided by the Youth Entitlement Program and Youth Employment Summer Program cannot be overlooked. Funding a similar program would be nearly impossible without the presence of comparable sources, which provide salaries for all the students involved. Castillo feels, however, that many communities have such sources of funding available to them, in the form of local foundations or even churches that habitually make community donations.

Support by the Berkeley youth community is essential, since, again, many of the adult community members have been less than supportive. Fortunately, Berkeley has several channels open for support of youth programs. The Berkeley City Council appoints a Youth Commission to make recommendations for programs, and young people are included on the School Board, to voice needs of youth.

Although this project was begun without a formal needs assessment, (since youth needs were continually assessed in the Family Planning Clinic), such an assessment might prove invaluable in duplicating the Teen Peer Education Project elsewhere.

Anderson's ideal would be to have the project included in the schools. This would provide service to a wider group of young people, and would include regular laboratory use as part of training. As she puts it, "Every kid could use this program."

General Comments:

Staff and participants in the Teen Peer Education Project feel that it is living up to, and surpassing, its own modest goals. The young people involved have gained not only in confidence, but in personal health care values and career goals as well. They answer a need in the youth community, as evidenced by the attendance at sessions and conferences, and are planning future projects to affect the lives of even more young people. Their success seems to depend, in some measure, on the skill and knowledge of their trainers, who provide them not only with accurate information to pass along, but with support skills as well The students' own evaluations of the project are essential to its growth, and add to later personal gains, as they evaluate career and other life choices. Their later interest in the health care field indicates that a solid but enjoyable foundation has been laid.

Name of Project: Unitas Therapeutic Community Inc.

Address: St. Athanasius School
830 Southern Boulevard
Bronx, NY 10459

Telephone: (212) 589-0551

Funding Sources: NY State Division for Youth
NYC Youth Board
Greater New York Fund

Annual Budget: $88,150

Number of Staff: Approximately 9

Number of Participants: 35

Contact Person: Dr. Edward Eismann

Background

Using neighborhood young people as role models for children uniquely links community youth together in their own self-help network, as it ties them to trained psychiatric personnel in a host of community facilities that can help meet their individual needs. Unitas uses the street itself as the base for therapeutic intervention, and street youth as adolescent helpers who counsel troubled young people in this South Bronx, NY community. Moving out of the hospital clinic to the streets has provided the dual opportunity of bringing therapy to children who need it most and of intervening in the environment that affects their behavior patterns. This program provides more than employment experience; it offers real opportunities for youth to experience adult roles. Both adolescent helpers and the children they counsel benefit; positive behaviors are reinforced in children treated, while the world of adult decision making, responsibility and work come alive for adolescent helpers as they experience the challenges of coping with real community problems.

Project Goals and Objectives

Unitas is based upon the belief that clinical skills and perception can be most fully applied in a setting where neighbors can join in a community of concern for each other. The word means "unity" or "together" and reflects the reciprocal nature of the experience, in which counselor and counselee practice new behaviors. The program aims to prevent and remediate

delinquent behavior and alienation that often result from poverty, family disorganization and negative aspects of the street culture. Through this program, young people can learn to understand each other and themselves as they become valuable resources, meeting some of their community's most urgent needs.

Project Description

Unitas is a year-round mental health clinic using trained neighborhood youth as surrogate parents for troubled children. Begun ten years ago as an outpatient service of Lincoln Mental Health Center, Unitas is now an independent entity, designed to treat children on the streets where they live and play. Groups of 2 to 4 children are "parented" by a neighborhood youth. These groups are made up of children who are perceived to have emotional problems as well as other children from the same block who have play interests in common. The simulated family provides support and serves to offset the children's real family experiences. The teenage "mothers" and "fathers" often serve as liaisons between families and the agencies and organizations which can provide needed assistance and services; arrange group trips to recreational facilities, providing further opportunities to strengthen group relationships in new settings; and sometimes set up medical appointments and accompany "their children" to them. More traditional modes of treatment, such as individual, group, and family therapy, are conducted by Unitas professionals.

As neighbors, the members of the "family unit" may interact in a diverse array of settings and circumstances, but the program is based on youth organized and supervised play time. Fox Street, which runs through the heart of the 5-block area the program serves, turns into a playground during the summer months. The teenage "parents," working six hours a day, plan and run arts and crafts, gymnastics and sports sessions. Trained to identify and relate to feelings expressed or behavior exhibited during these play activities, the teenagers intercede on the spot. For instance, if a child is having trouble building with blocks, the teenager will talk to feelings of frustration and offer support, little caring whether or not the structure ever gets built. If an outsider is causing a disturbance, the youth might mobilize the group to deal with the intruder, while guiding them from confrontation to the sharing of feelings. In winter, the street activities are duplicated in St. Athanasis parochial school for 2 or 3 hours a day.

Training sessions are held 4 hours a week during the summer months and 2 hours a week during the winter. The professional staff not only teaches helpers about human behavior and therapeutic techniques but also offers them a chance to discuss personal problems that affect their work and to assess their own growth within the work situation.

Each day at Unitas ends with an extended family council sessions, directed by Dr. Eismann, in which both adolescent helpers and the young people they help come together and share whatever is on their minds - personal problems, successes, hurts, anxieties - and receive feedback from the group.

Administrative Structure and Staff Roles

The clinical director is responsible for program design and for training the adolescent helpers. In addition, a full-time social worker and youth worker oversee daily sessions, intervening to change destructive behavior patterns. Three graduate students in social work take their final year of clinical training with Unitas and two undergraduate students receive credit for their work with the program. A graduate art therapist, graduate nurse and volunteer Special Education teacher also share responsibilities for therapeutic intervention on a daily basis. Adolescent helpers work with and receive direction from these staff members. Graduate student staff work on a volunteer basis for the project, and conform to a regular schedule of hours, contributing reliable part-time support to the effort.

Recruitment/Youth Profile

Youth helpers, usually between agess 14-21, are selected from among individuals whom the director has seen interact with children on the streets or during play sessions and who effectively help them in solving problems. Some of the teenagers who grew up in the program are now entrusted with a group of their own after apprenticing for a year as "aunts" and "uncles" under a surrogate parent. Others are referred by friends who are themselves helpers. All are from the South Bronx area that Unitas serves and have personally experienced the problems of low-income, gang pressure, drug use, and resultant alienation. Many refer to themselves as having once been shy, unable to speak before a group, and in some cases "problem" children. Youth helpers reflect the characteristics of their neighborhood; all are economically disadvantaged; most are Black or Hispanic young people, and there is an almost equal mix of males and females.

Outcomes To Date

Unitas reaches young people by working on the streets, where hundreds of situations occur that can be explored therapeutically. Neighborhood children and parents who learned to trust Unitas from watching it work in their neighborhood bring individual problems. Hundreds of persons who would have been least likely to seek help in a clinic setting have been serviced by Unitas over the past ten years. Youth helpers have drawn on their own insights into their community in helping children deal with

negative peer pressures, destructive group formation, family crises or breaking out of old roles and patterns. Youth helpers have gained an understanding of anti-social behaviors and of techniques for dealing with them that has gone far in helping them grow and realize their own potential for adulthood.

Problems/Progress

Unitas has faced a number of problems in establishing credibility in the area. Neighborhood adults were initially suspicious of the project because they feared it would bring undesirables to their block. Pre-adolescent gangs were threatened by the new group and as a result caused interruptions. As the group developed, word-of-mouth reports about its work generated community support. Local churches, health facilities and schools began to support the group by providing materials and resources. Local and city press promoted the group's activities in many articles. Unitas has taken care to maintain communications with its neighbors, supportive agencies and media. When the Lincoln Mental Health Center lost federal funding in 1976 and could no longer fund Unitas, its work continued voluntarily. The group incorporated, set up a Board of Directors and by April, 1977, was able to obtain the financial support it now receives from two foundations.

Implementation Hints

The idea of using young people to counsel peers or children serves as a dual function in any neighborhood: it brings help to troubled young people at the same time that it provides new skills, behaviors and self-perception to the young counselors. Using this kind of program to its maximum potential requires professional program supervision, on a daily basis, and well-planned training for adolescent helpers. Training workshops, like those incorporated into Unitas, provide time for young workers to learn about human behavior, therapeutic techniques and alternatives for handling counseling situations. Reflective seminars offer a period for critical evaluation. Without both training workshops and reflective seminars, the work experience falls short of being a real learning experience. Building therapeutic communities like Unitas also involves assessing emotional needs community youth have that other young people can best help to meet. While adolescent helpers cannot substitute for professional psychologists, they can supplement their efforts and offer positive role models and support for young people. The helpers themselves are selected on the basis of their ability to relate to the younger, troubled children they work with, with consideration given to their interest in learning therapeutic techniques, their ability to use these and sustain caring relationships with their "children." A variety of community settings - from the street to a spare classroom or storefront - can house such programs, provided that they are accessible to the population being served, informal in their

arrangements, and offer an atmosphere for sharing and participation.

General Comments

This program, along with other peer co-counseling, youth crisis-intervention and therapeutic-community projects, involve young people in challenging, responsible action that meets real community needs. Youth counsel their peers on drug abuse, peer pressure, health and contraception at Aunt Martha's Youth Service Center, 2447 Western Avenue, Park Forest, Ill. 60466. In St. Paul, Minnesota, Teen Age Health Consultants are a trained network of peer counselors who counsel other youth on health services and needs. The group, based at 1600 Portland Ave., St. Paul, Minnesotta 55104, combines youth with a variety of income levels and academic skills to train peers about health. The Adolescent Health Consumers at the University of Colorado Medical Center, School of Nurses, 4200 East 9th Ave, C287, Denver, CO 80262., similarly uses adolescents to advise their peers on how to alert consumers of health care that they require. Other counseling efforts focus on numerous issues like students' rights, legal advocacy or abused adolescents.

Name of Project: Senior Sportsfest

Address: 834 East 156th Street
Bronx, New York 10455

Telephone: 212-665-6811

Administering Agency: Sports for the People

Funding Sources: Chase Manhattan Bank
Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP)

Annual Budget: $50,000

Number of Staff: 5 adults, 1 youth coordinator

Number of Youth Participants: 30 for summer 1981

Contact Person: Marcelino Estrada, Deputy Executive Director of Sports for the People

Abstract

Thirty young people teach exercises to elderly people (seniors) at nearly one hundred senior centers all over New York City. They work in pairs in this eight-week summer program, teaching classes of twenty to thirty seniors in several types of exercises. Many of the exercises were developed by a member of the Board of Directors for Sports for the People, herself a senior. The young people are trained for two weeks in gerontology, first aid, exercises, nutrition, and sociology of the aging. They also participate in daily classes that continue their training and provide time for reflection and discussion about their work. Their work culminates with an annual Senior Sportsfest.

Background

In the mid-1970's, a group of New York residents became concerned that sports were becoming the preserve of the rich, the young and the superstars. They felt that play space of any type is inadequate in most cities, and particularly in New York, due to the "long history of non-planning and real estate speculation." To counteract these trends and to try to return sports to a majority of people, they formed Sports for the People. The agency organized a People's Opening Day at Yankee Stadium, where 2000 people were able to exercise and protest the building of a $150 million ballpark when hospitals, schools and parks were all deteriorating in their neighborhoods. They helped to organize anti-apartheid demonstrations at tennis tournaments, led a campaign to prevent the closing of after-school gym programs in New York, and conducted a campaign to tax professional sports teams operating in New York - the resulting revenues to go to improve recreational facilities and parks.

In 1979, agency staff people decided to plan some activities that would counteract the myth that seniors are lazy, a myth they felt developed, in part, because seniors don't get enough exercise. They wanted, at the same time, to counteract feelings that seniors held about young people: that they are irresponsible, wild and usually out to harm or rob old people. With the intention of dispelling these myths in mind, Sports for the People established the first Senior Sportfest, with young people working as exercise teachers. 1981 will be the third summer for the Sportsfest.

Project Goals and Objectives

There are two major goals of the Senior Sportsfest. The first is to "exercise the right of seniors to exercise." The second is to provide a learning experience for young people, one that will alleviate the "generation gap."

Project Description

The thirty young people in the program work for approximately eight weeks during the summer. They are paid minimum wage by the Summer Youth Employment Program, and a slightly higher wage by the Chase Manhattan Bank for any additional time they spend after the eight weeks. They work five days a week, half a day at senior centers and half a day at classes at Sports for the People.

They begin the program with two weeks of training provided by the project director, during which they study gerontology, first aid, exercise, sociology of aging and nutrition. They learn how to lead three types of exercises: chair exercises, standing exercises and meditation. Ruth Golden, a senior and a member of the Sports for the People Board of Directors, developed many of the exercises based on her own needs and her perception of the needs of seniors in general. Participants pair up and are assigned to particular senior centers that have asked to join the program.

After the two week training period, the two young people go to their center and teach a class of twenty to thirty seniors. They use all three types of exercises, but the arrangement and time spent on each is up to the youth leaders, depending on their desires and the seniors' preferences. Pairs of youth leaders travel to more than one center a week, since among them they lead classes at nearly one hundred centers. They spend the morning at the centers, and return to Sports for the People in the afternoons.

The afternoons are spent in classes that focus on three types of discussions: a rap session; discussion about their own bodies, sexuality and physiology; and political education to help understand seniors' problems within a political context. Generally a single class session involves one of these topics, with one or two repeated during a week. The rap sessions provide time for the young people to discuss their work and to voice any problems or concerns, as well as share successess.

At the end of the eight weeks, Sports for the People sponsors the Senior Sportsfest, a huge, day-long event for seniors and their youth leaders. 2000 seniors participated in the 1980 Sportsfest,

held in New York City's Riverside Park, at which they demonstrated some of the exercises they had learned, as well as performing dances, roller-skating routines, golf-tricks and kite-flying, and running in a track meet early in the day. Youth participants circulated among them, helped with exercises, and passed out box lunches.

Administrative Structure and Staff Roles

Five adult staff members work with the Senior Sportsfest. The project director oversees all aspects of the program. A staff artist designs all graphics, including a brochure of exercises the youth leaders hand out to the seniors. Three supervisors work at specific centers, helping the youth leaders and the staff of the senior centers. In addition, a youth coordinator helps to teach exercises to the youth leaders, organizes classes, and helps to coordinate the Sportsfest itself.

Recruitment and Youth Profile

Most of the youth leaders are chosen from among those who apply to the Summer Youth Employment Program in the Bronx neighborhood that houses Sports for the People. Staff members interview many of the SYEP applicants to determine if they have any interest in working with seniors. Marcelino Estrada, the Deputy Executive Director of Sports for the People, says that even if young people say they don't want to work with seniors, staff people may encourage them to "give it a try."

The group of youth leaders is 50% male, 50% female, 65% Hispanic and 35% Black. They all come from low-income families and a number are school drop-outs. They range in age from 16 to 19.

Outcomes to Date

Marcelino Estrada says that the youth in the program benefit by being involved in a positive employment experience. Many Summer Youth Employment Programs involve youth in menial tasks that have no future. The Senior Sportsfest provides a new experience, that of being able to relate to the elderly and learn from them. Many of the youth leaders, Estrada says, have never thought of exercise as a means of employment. The program shows them there are new areas to study for later careers: gerontology, sports medicine, or physical education.

In addition, he says, the "old people fall in love with the kids." They see a positive side to youth, and find that not all youth are involved in crime. Estrada hopes to set up year-round rap groups to help foster this positive view of youth in many more seniors.

One youth leader summed up his experience when he said, "We learn and they learn." Another said, "We just talk away. I learn things I never knew before. They tell me about what countries they're from, like Europe or the Bahamas. And about how they live and their grandchildren. And they learn other things from youth than just exercises."

Lori Brown, the program's youth coordinator, says she has developed leadership skills through her work. She is more comfortable with people, especially with seniors. She wishes others could share her experience: "If people would just take time to talk to them, they'd learn so much." Brown feels there should be more programs for youth and seniors, especially because "they learned that not all youth are bad or want to snatch their pocketbooks. Some do care."

Estrada says staff people evaluate the program by the response they get when it's over. How many senior centers want to continue with the program, for instance. They have found that every center involved in the program wants it to continue, and that the seniors involved have become more active in advocating senior exercise programs. Last year, for example, thousands of seniors signed petitions directed at city officials, to continue and increase senior exercise programs in the city.

Problems and Progress

Lack of funds is a major problem for the project, says Estrada. He says that sports for everyone, and especially for seniors, is not a funding priority. As he says, "It's the first thing to get cut." The lack of money prevents the Senior Sportsfest from becoming a year-round program, which staff people would eventually like to see.

Transportation is another problem caused by lack of funds. Youth leaders use public transportation, but seniors are often afraid or unable to do so, and must be bused if they travel away from their immediate neighborhoods. Sports for the People has an extensive recreational facility that seniors could use if they could get there, Estrada says, but the agency has no funds to provide buses for them.

A possible solution to these problems, but one which is proving difficult to effect, is to get legislators interested in exercise for seniors. Sports for the People tries to get their interest, but has thus far not been very successful.

Implementation Hints

Marcelino Estrada has a number of suggestions for anyone who wants to develop a program like the Senior Sportsfest. First, he says, identify a group of seniors to begin the program. Second, find ways of getting some money from the private sector and combine it with public money to provide employment for the youth participants. Sports for the People was able to get money from the Chase Manhattan Bank through its Chase Center 60, a program developed especially for people 60 and older.

Estrada also suggests getting someone to train the young people. In the Senior Sportsfest, they were trained by the project director and other staff, with help from a senior who developed many of the exercises they used. Setting up a consistent schedule is also important, he advises. And, finally, you must do a lot of lobbying, to get legislators and the public in general to accept the idea of exercise for seniors.

General Comments

Seniors and youth both have a need to feel wanted and to feel important.

Sports for the People thinks that both also have a need for exercise: the youth to expel their energy in a healthy, constructive manner; and the seniors, to avoid a feeling of degeneration that can come with aging. The Senior Sportsfest answers these needs by making the youth leaders feel important through their teaching and the seniors feel important as they share their life's experiences with a willing and interested audience. Both groups participate in the exercise that helps to keep them healthy and active members of society. And ultimately, both groups learn that the other isn't as bad as they thought.

Name of Project: The Divorced Kids Group

Address: Lexington High School
251 Waltham St.
Lexington, MA 02173
(617) 862-7500, Ext 155

Administering Agency: Lexington H.S. Guidance Center

Funding Sources: Funds are raised by group

Budget:

Staff: Part-time advisor

Youth Participants: 30 high school students

Contact: Howard A. Schofield, Advisor

Abstract

A group of 30 "divorced" students (children of divorced or separated parents) meet once a week during their lunch hour to provide peer support and plan outreach activities for other adolescents whose parents are in the divorce/separation process. Six to ten members of the group serve as Guidance Assistants (peer counselors) and provide most of the leadership within the group. Activities have included making presentations in classes both at Lexington H.S. and at other schools, community and church organizations and professional conferences, and developing an Assertiveness Training Model for use by Divorced Kids.

Background

The Divorced Kids Group was formed in December 1976 by a Divorced Kid (D.K.) and a staff member of the Guidance Department, to provide a support system for students at their high school whose parents were in the divorce/separation process. Both saw that there were insufficient services available to adolescents whose parents had separated, and on the basis of their experience with, and the success of, peer-counseling programs, decided to use a peer-counseling approach.

Students were recruited by guidance staff from among those whose parents were in the divorce/separation process. All together, about 30 students, mostly girls, chose to join the group. This number

has remained fairly constant over the four years of the program's activity.

The program's participants consist of students in grades 10-12 who range from 14-18 years old. Typically, these students come from white, middle-class, suburban backgrounds.

The advisor of Divorced Kids Group structured the program on a model devised by the Divorce Adjustment Center in Evanston, Illinois. Three levels of service would be initiated: information, activities, and support. Within this model, little structure would be imposed.

Project Goals and Objectives

Once the group was formed the students, themselves, set out their goals:

(1) To help students whose parents are in the divorce/separation process to cope with problems particular to their situation, and to provide information not otherwise available to them;

(2) to gain knowledge of the effects of the divorce/separation process on children;

(3) to promote advocacy for children whose parents are in the divorce/separation process;

(4) to extend the expertise and experience gained by the group to their immediate family, the schools and the community.

The objectives and activities undertaken in order to achieve these goals are explained below.

Project Description

The activities of this program can be divided into three categories: information-sharing, activities, and support.

Information-Sharing: DKs seek out and attempt to share information on issues that are relevant to the problems and topics they face as children of divorced or separated parents. Some of these topices might include custody, money and its management, siblings, parents' friends, being put in the middle, and role reversal.

There are several ways the DKs can obtain information on these topics. Several professionals who work in the area of divorce meet with the students to discuss issues; these professionals have included a sociologist, three attorneys, and a variety of psychologists. The issues are posed by the Advisor, Guidance Assistants

(peer counselors), and group members. Some DKs do research, for academic credit, on these issues. This is a second method of obtaining information.

Activities: The Divorced Kids Group meets once a week in their support group; in addition, those who form the core group meet once a week to plan their activities. Many of the core group members receive academic credit for the work they do, including some of their research, and their work as Guidance Assistants.

The activities of DK revolve around the goal to reach out into the community with information, and with their commitment to peer support.

One way students extend themselves is to make presentations to other schools, to parent groups, and to community organizations. For example, the issue of financial aid for Divorced Kids was presented to three financial aid advisors in local colleges; also five DKs and the Advisor presented a program to 125 guidance counselors at the Massachusetts School Counselors' Association annual convention. Another way outreach is accomplished is through media contacts which, in the past, have included a guest appearance on the local television station, students and the Advisor writing articles for newsletters and magazines, and an interview with the editor of the Lexington Minute-Man newspaper.

Support: Peer support takes place on an informal level in weekly meetings open to "divorced" peers. Leadership within these meetings is assumed by student Guidance Assistants, who work with guidance staff in providing peers with coping, assertiveness, and other self-help skills training.

In addition to providing support within their own group, DKs work on ways in which they can extend their model of support to others. During their second year of operation, DK's developed a day-long program on Coping Skills for Divorced Kids which they have used in both the Lexington Public Schools and other school districts, to share their experiences.

Special Features and Problems

The Divorced Kids Group has received recognition from professional, media and lay persons, at the local and national levels, for their work. The Lexington Public Schools Screening Committee for Research and Development awarded a grant to the group to explore further resources, through which students reviewed, recommended, and ordered materials which were then sent to the appropriate libraries and resource centers. The group has raised the consciousness of many individuals through their outreach and development of resource materials on the subject of "divorced" children.

In addition to public recognition, the DKs themselves seem to feel good about what they are doing:

"Talking to the group, I found that I have a whole other 'family.' I can talk to divorced kids - they are more understanding." (Kathy) 1/

"I learned I have rights as a kid. When my parents get their divorce, I'm going to have something in the written agreement that provides for my education." (Karen) 2/

The program has not changed significantly in its four years of existence. As I spoke on the phone with the program's advisor, voices of students, DKs he told me, were background noise for his explanation of how students were still planning outreach activities for peers who they wanted to recruit into the program. "We want to get more students who are experiencing similar problems and feelings, involved," he told me. The program's number of participants has not changed a great deal since its start. We're trying to figure out why we're not attracting more students. Support from other staff members may be part of the problem." He went on to suggest parent hostility as another possible barrier to youth interested in joining the group.

According to statistics, one out of every six children under 18 in the U.S. today, is a child of divorce.3/ The Divorced Kids are aware, and want to make others aware, of this special population.

1/ Gardner, Sandra. "Divorced Kids--Organizing to Help Each Other," Senior Scholastic (November 15, 1979: p. 10).
2/ Ibid
3/ Ibid, p. 9

Name of Project:	Teen Advocate Program (TAP)
Address:	South Bay Free Clinic 1807 Manhattan Beach Boulevard Manhattan Beach, California 90266
Telephone:	(213) 376-2149
Administering Agency:	South Bay Free Clinic
Funding Sources:	Rosenberg Foundation, CETA
Annual Budget:	$29,000
Number of Staff:	1 Teen Advocate Coordinator - (paid) Several CARE-Line Supervisors - (volunteer)
Number of Youth Participants::	15
Contact Person:	Louise Miller, M.P.H., TAP Coordinator

Abstract

Fifteen paid Teen Advocates, ages 15 to 17, provide health information and assistance to their peers in a variety of ways. They distribute calling cards to other youth and adults, conduct educational sessions at community organizations, serve as liaisons between high schools and the South Bay Free Clinic, participate in health fairs, and accompany youth clients to the Clinic. They also work on the CARE-Line, a health information and referral help line. Teen Advocates are trained by Clinic staff members and educators from local community agencies in anatomy and physiology, sexuality and substance abuse, Clinic procedures and other health-related issues.

Background

In the late 1970's, staff at the South Bay Free Clinic, a multi-service health clinic, became concerned at the amount of incorrect information about sexuality that young people learned from their peers. They decided to use young people's existing desire to turn to their peers for information, and developed the Teen Advocate Program (TAP). The "idea was to take a group of highly motivated, open, non-judgmental teenagers, train them in basic sexuality information and allow them to act as peer educators." Staff members were able to obtain funding and the project began in June, 1980.

Project Goals and Objectives

A media information packet about TAP states that "the South Bay Free Clinic's new Teen Advocate Program is an attempt to help solve a frustrating and steadily worsening problem" of young people in trouble with pregnancy, substance abuse or the law. The TAP Coordinator said, "The Teen Advocate Program is designed to create networks of trust. Kids go to kids anyhow. Those communications channels already exist. What we have been looking for, what we think we have found, is the right way to tap into them."

Project Description

Young people in TAP educate their peers about a range of health-related information. The fifteen teen advocates are paid minimum wage for ten hours of work a week. They spend four of those hours in their own schools and the community, providing information to their peers on an informal basis - as the project director puts it, by "being themselves." In the cafeteria or "wherever kids congregate, they talk about whatever they talk about - sex or their jobs." The Teen Advocates simply add their knowledge to the ongoing conversation, or they are approached by peers who recognize them as Teen Advocates. They fill out a form for each "contact" they have made, stating where, for how long and on what topic the conversation took place. The project director has completed forms on conversations held in hot tubs, at sports events and even in taxi cabs.

During their four hours in schools and community, the Teen Advocates also speak to classes, often offering themselves as resources to health education teachers. They have learned diplomacy, the director says, by having to think of tactful ways to correct a teacher's outdated information. They also go with the Clinic's community health educator to other schools (often junior high schools) or agencies such as the YWCA to make presentations.

The Teen Advocates also work four hours a week at the South Bay Free Clinic. There they spend two hours giving birth control "raps," doing client intake for adult and youth clients, taking blood pressure and assisting in an examination room by client request. A Teen Advocate may have met someone at school who needed to visit the Clinic, but needed the added support of being accompanied by the Advocate to the Clinic and through all its procedures.

The other two hours (of the four at the Clinic) are spent working on the CARE-Line (Phone number: 374-CARE), a health information and referral help line, not a crisis hotline. The CARE-Line operates Monday through Thursday, 4-8 p.m.

Teen Advocates spend their final two hours, from 3:00 to 5:00 on Fridays, in a TAP staff meeting. They discuss problems, participate in further training, hear speakers or work on such matters as recruitment of next year's Advocates.

In addition to their regular duties, the Teen Advocates have formed several committees, some of which are more active than others, according to the project coordinator. The Media Committee has gotten radio and television coverage for the project, and has designed a poster for the CARE-Line and a public service announcement. The Fund Raising Committee has planned events such as a rock concert to raise funds for TAP. The Resources and Referral Committee is updating the Clinic's resource file. And a special committee is working on a slide show designed to raise consciousness about adolescent health care, and explain how TAP can help.

Teen Advocates were trained initially for thirty hours during the summer. Training included group building, values clarification, and communication skills, since the project coordinator says "it's real important for them to be able to support each other." The content part of the training included anatomy and physiology, substance abuse, and decision-making processes.

The project coordinator has now increased the training to ninety hours, which include a workshop by a sex therapist (since many of the CARE-Line questions relate to sexual dysfunction), information on incest and rape, and more study of drug abuse.

The Teen Advocates received additional special training for their work on the CARE-Line from the project coordinator, who had been through training herself for a sex information help line. They learned special telephone skills through role-playing and other problem-solving techniques. The major difficulty, according to the coordinator, is "keeping the problem with the caller, not taking it on yourself." This objectivity allows the Advocates to ask appropriate questions, rather than trying to solve the caller's problem all at once.

Administrative Structure and Staff Roles

The South Bay Free Clinic opened in 1969 as a non-profit agency, providing a wide range of services on a "fee-free" basis. It currently handles more than 24,000 annual visits, up from 1600 at its start. In addition to the TAP, the Clinic offers general medical care, family planning assistance, psychological counseling, emergency dentistry, legal advisement, podiatry, senior citizens programs, referrals and a speaker's bureau.

The TAP Coordinator is responsible for hiring the Teen Advocates, gaining school district support, conducting most training sessions, representing TAP at meetings with community leaders and generally overseeing the program.

Volunteer CARE-Line supervisors provide guidance and support to the Teen Advocates. Some come from another helpline, others from the Clinic's psychology department.

Recruitment and Youth Profile

The project coordinator was hired for this project a week before the end of school, in 1980. She contacted teachers at the four schools near the clinic, but with little result, since they had many other concerns during that last week. She put ads in many local newspapers, including local beach "throwaway" papers, and enough youth responded to form the Teen Advocates. Now the Teen Advocates serve as models and help to recruit their peers. The coordinator hopes to expand into other high schools, and is pleased to note that a blind student from a special school has expressed interest in the project.

Of the fifteen youth Advocates, 11 are female and 4 are male. They range in age from 15 to 17, and come from lower-middle to middle-income families. Two are Hispanic and two are Filipino; the others are white.

Outcomes to Date

Louise Miller, the project coordinator, gave the Teen Advocates a pretest when they entered the program, consisting of questions designed to determine knowledge of sexuality, birth control, and drugs, feelings about their own bodies, and "social maturity." She is administering a post-test in the summer of 1981, and will have hard data available on the gains made by the youth.

She says that "off the cuff" she can see that the Teen Advocates feel more comfortable about their own sexuality and their ability to communicate. She also says that many were hesitant to speak in public at first, but "now they're pros. They handle really adversary questions with poise." Kirke Wilson of the Rosenberg Foundation, the project's funder, noted of the Advocates that "They know their own limitations."

Miller also thinks participation in the project has solidified the young people's interest in human services professions. One young woman is already decided on a health career.

In a 1980 Media Information packet, the Teen Advocates commented on their work. One said, "To me, the Clinic is a way of getting to know my community and its problems a little better. The Clinic has much to offer people. I am very glad and proud to be a Teen Advocate." Another added, "The Teen Advocate Program has helped me help myself, too."

One young woman explained, "My reason for becoming a Teen Advocate is because of the lack of communication between people." She added, "I guess a big part of wanting to be a Teen Advocate was that I could see myself as a hero solving all the problems of young people."

A young man said frankly that, "I value money, to some extent. Thus, a job which paid and in which I could work with and help my peers, such as being a Teen Advocate, appealed greatly to me."

Another young woman, seven months pregnant at the time, said she had learned a lot in the program. She added, "In looking forward to the future, I haven't decided exactly what I want to do, but I do want to stay in the field that I am in."

Problems and Progress

Louise Miller notes that one of the project's major current problems is getting the CARE-Line advertised. She has been told that it's common for a help-line to take time in being known and accepted, but says "It's driving me crazy." The young people are getting bored, she says, because much of their time on the CARE-Line is spent waiting for calls. They have developed posters and radio announcements advertising the CARE-Line, but these haven't had the desired results thus far.

Another problem is that her job is only a half-time position, and she always has too much work to do. There are many more projects she wants to try with the Teen Advocates, like putting together a radio show or writing regular columns for school newspapers, but as she puts it, "Any new thing takes so much time!"

Money is a problem in that the project's grant will run for only three years, and Miller feels the project will just be getting really established when the money runs out.

Finally, she says, space is at a premium at the Clinic, and things are often hectic. A little more space for the project might be helpful.

Implementation Hints

Miller says it is extremely helpful to have the support of the total agency when running a program like TAP. She says the South Bay Free Clinic is supportive: "It's like a family here."

She also says the young people should be seen as part of the total staff. The Teen Advocates do much of the same work as adult volunteers at the Clinic. This sometimes causes friction, because the youth see themselves as more capable sometimes than the adults. But Miller's basic philosopy is that "kids are competent. If people are going to come around calling them

children and treating them as less than equal, the program won't work." She tries to involve the youth in decisions as much as possible. For instance, the Clinic is now doing a needs assessment for next year's activities, which the young people planned and implemented. Young people, Miller says, should feel pride in their program. It should be more than just a job; they should feel ownership. They should know the importance of what they do and be rewarded for it.

With regard to her own role, Miller says that the coordinator should provide guidance, support and direction that the youth need, but must be with them enough that "they can trust you, open up with you. There is a very precarious balance between these." The coordinator must be a person, she says, who continuously checks him or herself on relations with the youth.

Finally, Miller says, there has to be a structure in the project. It's fine if the young people decide on structure themselves, but they must hold to it. The Teen Advocates decided on their own work shifts, and it is vital that they be at work when they are supposed to be.

General Comments

One question asked by those who work with young people is how much structure the program should involve and how much unstructured time is helpful. The Teen Advocates Program strikes a balance that may be precarious for the project coordinator, but seems to be reasonable for the youth involved. They spend half their time "in the field," adding their knowledge and skills to informal conversations that take place wherever the Teen Advocates happen to be. And half their time is spent in specific duties at the Clinic, assisting with Clinic procedures or working at the CARE-Line. They have the freedom to decide on their "field activities" and their committees, and the structured work environment at the Clinic, where they are seen as responsible staff members.

APPENDIX

Program Description of the YOUTH ACTION PROGRAM

Name of Project: Youth Action Program

Address: 1280 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10029
(212) 860-8170

Administering Agency: East Harlem Block Nursery, Inc.

Funding Sources: Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA)
Youth Employment Demonstration Projects Act (YEDPA, YETP), foundations, private
U.S. Department of Labor/Youthwork, Inc.

Budget: $600,000 as of September, 1980
$150,000 1978-1980

Staff: 8-10 adults and several youth staff members

Youth Participants: Approximately 100

Contact: Dorothy Stoneman, Director
David Calvert, YARC Project Organizer

Abstract

This is a multi-faceted community improvement program created and run by East Harlem youth with the help of several adult facilitators. Seven projects are being worked on: Youth Action Restoration Crew, which is renovating a four-story building; Johnson Youth Patrol, a group of teenagers who patrol the Johnson projects to help cut crime; We are Somebody Community Center, a community cultural center and soon-to-be leadership school; Hotline Cares, a telephone counseling and referral service; Young People's Block Association, which is converting a vacant lot into a playground/park; Homes-Away-From-Home, which creates strong home situations for youths in troubled families by placement in "second families" or in collective living centers; and Youth Forum, which promotes political action through speakouts, newsletters, and meetings. A variety of fundraising and community awareness activities are held.

Background

The Youth Action Program (YAP) began to develop in February of 1978, when Dorothy Stoneman, an East Harlem teacher and day care worker, started to work with a small group of young people interested in community improvement projects. This group set building rehabilitation as an early priority, and begun to work on a two-story building on 107th Street, hoping to renovate it for use as a meeting place.

After a while, the 107th Street building rehabilitation site was given up--the proper permits had not been obtained, City agencies had not been contacted, and besides, as one youth put it, "a bunch of winos had the building anyway." This first venture was considered a success, however, since the amount of work completed indicated that such a group of young people could remain motivated, could be cohesive, and would have the potential to create and complete neighborhood self-help projects.

The group then got permission from the Board of Directors of the East Harlem Block Schools to rehabilitate an abandoned school building. The project was supported by YEDA funds, and the school building later became the home of the We Are Somebody Community Center.

It now became clear to Dorothy Stoneman, and the young people that she was working with, that there was a huge reservoir of untapped energy and concern in the youth of East Harlem. A far-reaching, diverse set of community improvement projects was planned, and in the fall of 1978, a large LEAA grant was awarded to organize and operate these programs--under the umbrella of the Youth Action Program.

Young people helped not only to plan the various projects of YAP, but also participated in interviewing and hiring the adult organizing staff. Finally, on January 15, 1979, payroll started for YAP employees, and the program began on a full basis.

What do youth do?

At present there are seven different neighborhood Youth Action projects, each with its own climate, and its own emphasis. These projects are held together by the common goal of providing young people with the tools and knowledge to bring about social change; each project is kept informed about the activities of the others during general meetings, which are held on payday.

The seven current Youth Action Projects are:

> Hotline Cares- A telephone counseling and referral service, Hotline Cares was formed in the early 1970's and became a part of YAP in 1979. Hotline Cares stresses crisis response to phone calls and in-person visits, runs an anti-Angel Dust campaign, and helps to find housing for the homeless in the community. The teenagers on the Hotline staff are both volunteer and paid. The program has an LEAA grant of $70,000.
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> Hotline Cares is well integrated into the community and is providing full-time services which respond to the housing and drug abuse needs of East Harlem.

"You call their number," said one YAP staff member, "and someone will answer with 'Hotline cares.' There's someone right there, ready to listen... There are many hotlines, but only one Hotline Cares."

Youth Action Restoration Crew (YARC) - A group of teenagers (male and female,) are renovating a four-story building, which they plan to use for a variety of community-serving purposes. The plans include space for a community center, two commercial units, and a collective living unit for 6-8 youth with an adult mentor. In this sweat equity project, the young people are being trained in all phases of construction and building rehabilitation. Staff salaries for YARC are provided through the YAP LEAA grant, and through a New York City Department of Employment contract. The Crew works with the Renegades Housing Movement (an urban sweat equity group which provides YARC with technical assistance and "renovation know-how"), a volunteer electrician, a boilerman, and a professional architect.

Johnson Youth Patrol- Along with Hotine Cares, the Johnson Youth Patrol existed before YAP was formed, and became a Youth Action project when the Program was funded in 1979. The Patrol is a group of thirty (mostly black male) youth, who travel around the James Weldon Johnson Projects at night. The youths keep in contact with walkie talkies, and wear jackets which identify themselves as Patrol members.

The Johnson Youth Patrol relies on its strong presence in the area to reduce crime. They have no special training in the martial arts, and prefer to deter crime by their numbers and systems of communication, rather than through violent vigilantism. Apparently, their approach is a sound one--crime rates rose rapidly in Southeast Harlem in 1979-80, but in Northeast Harlem, in which the Johnson Projects occupy many blocks, crime was not on the rise. A goal of the Youth Patrol is to "be responsive to the needs of the Johnson Project area in a full way." This goal is illustrated by the positive relationship the Patrol has developed with the Johnson Tenants' Association, and by the escort service for the elderly which the Patrol has set up. The dedication of these teenagers is evident in the enormous amount of volunteer time that they have spent in years of building the Youth Patrol. Only recently have YETP grants made salaries

for staff members possible.

We Are Somebody Center- Located in the youth-renovated school building at 1280 Fifth Avenue, the We Are Somebody Center serves to promote cultural awareness in the East Harlem community, presenting shows which explore Black, Puerto Rican, and Third World culture, as well as "fun events" such as dances, fashion shows, fundraisers, and so on.

Working with a high school African History teacher, the youth of We Are Somebody are organizing a Leadership School which will be affiliated with Park East High School. The Leadership School is intended as an alternative for those who drop out of high school. The curriculum stresses political awareness, basic math and writing skills, Third World history, tutoring young adults, and community organization skills. Since its target group is recent, unemployed drop-outs, the School will not draw students away from other schools, but instead will offer a new, exciting alternative for those who are dissatisfied with traditional public education.

The Leadership School was born out of the need, repeatedly expressed by young people, for such an alternative. The Youth of We Are Somebody spend their time recruiting teachers, painting and renovating the building, raising money, and developing position papers for the project. Why have youth gotten involved in so complex an undertaking? One young woman explains:

> "I didn't want to get involved in anything. I just thought that everything was going all right, till I saw Park East going down around me...I had to see everything going down around me--my school and my future--till I was ready to get involved. Kids have to see what's going on around them and care about changing it."

The teenagers of We Are Somebody seem to view the organization of the Leadership School as a very personal venture. In providing the structure for others to learn and grow, these young people are developing political and social sophistication, and are gaining the tools needed to take charge of their own lives.

Young Peoples' Block Assocation- A woman who was "born and raised" on 103rd Street organized a group of ten-to-thirteen-year-olds to renovate a vacant lot there. The group plans to convert the lot into a neighborhood playground and park; they have participated in clearing out trash and mural-painting. The group organized block parties to raise funds and bring the people on 103rd Street together. In order to determine the needs of the neighborhood, the group surveyed tenants on the streets. The Block Association is thus oriented not just towards building, but towards community support and service.

Homes-Away-From-Home- Based at 1280 Fifth Avenue, Homes-Away-From-Home seeks to create strong home situations for young people in East Harlem. This new project has a core group of six young people working with an adult organizer, exploring two forms of alternatives. One is a "second family" situation, where a teenager has a place to go in addition to his or her own home. The Homes-Away-From-Home workers look for the best sites, contact familes, and help plan the other alternative living situation--collective living centers, in which several young people live with an adult mentor in a warm, humane environment. The YARC building is a proposed site for such a collective living center.

Homes-Away-From-Home is connected to the Leadership School by a $450,000 Youthwork grant for a Leadership Experience Education Project. The youth staff of the project help out by recruiting students for the Leadership School.

Youth Forum- About twenty young people are exploring political issues in Youth Forum, the economic, social and political action part of YAP. Some of Youth Forum's achievements:

- participating in a coalition to save Metropolitan Hospital. Youth participants circulated petitions (and collected 1000 signatures), attended rallies, and invited speakers. One member was interviewed on radio. Metropolitan Hospital was not closed.
- the publication of the YAP newsletter
- speaking out on education, at the Board of Education's 110 Livingston Street Office.

- anti-draft action, including attending a Washington rally.
- anti-nuke action
- preparing radio programs (for a local radio station) on racism and sexism.

Youth Forum members are planning a Youth Conference for East Harlem involving people, agencies, and institutions that deal with youth on all levels. They are responsible for planning the general meetings and helping run them.

Project Description

The projects of YAP are especially noteworthy because of the degree of decision making (at several levels) that youth are involved in, the large amount of planning and organizing activity undertaken by youth participants, and the community awareness genrated by the work of each project. To examine more closely how a YAP project works, it will be helpful to look at the Youth Action Restoration Crew.

Objectives: YARC typifies the Youth Action philosophy of providing the knowledge necessary to bring about social change, through direct action to improve the community. The stated objectives of YARC indicate that it is intended to be much more than a "work program":

1. To purchase and totally rehabilitate 2328 Second Avenue for the public good.

2. To participate in building a youth advocacy movement for better lives for all of us in East Harlem.

3. To provide the community with positive cultural experiences and events.

4. To reverse the myth that young people are without creativity or concern for the community.

5. To build a coalition in East Harlem between young people and adults, between Puerto Ricans and Blacks (and all races), employed and unemployed, etc.

6. To improve the day to day living conditions of the community in concrete, physical ways.

Indeed the young people of YARC are active not only in the physical construction of the Second Avenue site, but also in raising funds (the youth participants held a "gong show," solicited private donations, and recycled lead and cast iron

pulled from the site for cash), participating in politcal action (YARC members participate in Youth Forum activities), and generally helping to improve the neighborhood (by cleaning up the streets, tutoring, examining public services).

YARC workers often explain that the project is more to them than just a job. On the site, one hears comments from the participants such as:

> "I like to see something new happening around here."
>
> "I care about my community. There's a lot of jobs out there that I can take, that pay maybe $5.50 an hour. But I'm here. Because I want to see this get done."
>
> "This is a step we have to go through, for the teenagers of the community. I have been with this building since the very start.

Of course, the Crew members emphasize the skills that they acquire on the job ("Before I started here, I didn't know how to take out a door...now I can rip a door out in five minutes"), but they each seem to have a personal stake in seeing the work completed--for their own satisfaction, and for the benefit of the community.

Making Decisions: The Crew functions as a democracy. Decisions are made by majority vote. Project organizer David Calvert describes the balance between acting as an adult leader and allowing the youth participants to assume responsibility:

> I enjoy sharing leadership. It's not always easy, but the concept of collective leadership is appealing to me. Work goes so much better if we all work together.

When asked about Calvert's role, the young people shrug, and say, "He's part of the crew."

Recruitment: Finding youth to get involved in Youth Action projects is not just a matter of putting up posters or preparing want ads. From YAP's very beginnings, Dorothy Stoneman sought to recruit young people through friendships and group relationships. "Once a group is involved," asserts one staff member, "their friends get involved also."

For YARC, this form of recruitment has been successful. One crew member got his brother to join up. Others got their friends involved. It appears as though the cohesiveness of the Crew is due to this use of friendship groups in finding YAP participants.

Unique Features: YARC workers get a chance to evaluate their process, look at each other's skills, and deal with problems at weekly meetings. Every Friday, the Crew gets together to review the work that had been done, and plan for the future. At the YAP general meetings, the Crew reports their progress, and learns where the other Youth Action projects are headed. These two types of meetings insure that the young people can reflect upon their own work, while seeing their activities from the perspective of community improvement and political and social awareness.

Members of YARC are pround that the young women on the Crew do the same tasks as the male crew members. Far from viewing construction/renovation as "a man's job," the two female crew members are viewed with respect by their co-workers. "The guys are used to us. Sometimes they even get carried away," said one. "When I'm working on the building I dress like a bum. When I come out on the street, people look at me and say 'Wow, that's a girl!" Again, the cohesiveness of the group and dedication to the project is evident.

General Comments

The Youth Action Program is a successful Youth Participation program in many respects. Certainly the young people of YAP are making significant contributions to the East Harlem community, and are devoting time and energy for changing their neighborhood, and their lives, for the better. The skills of the adult organizers as discussion leaders and as participants (as well as their respect for the youth) are clearly vital for the program's success. The youth get a chance to critically examine their activities and personal involvement, they get to see their work from the viewpoint of broad political and societal goals, and are planning and organizing projects which are meeting needs that they perceive.

YAP has shown that an employment program can be more than menial tasks and biweekly paychecks. Youth are motivated by the enthusiasm and competence of their friends, and discover their own capabilities: Says a Project Organizer:

> YAP asks youth "What do you like to do? What would you like to change?" Society assumes that young people don't want to do anything... but they have fantastic, amazing ideas.

By turning the ideas and plans of teenagers into action, YAP has helped improve East Harlem, and has proven to the youth themselves that they can have an impact on the community.